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CORNEILLE AND RACINE IN ENGLAND

CORNEILLE AND RACINE IN ENGLAND

A STUDY OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE TWO CORNEILLES AND RACINE, WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR PRESENTATION ON THE ENGLISH STAGE

BY

DOROTHEA FRANCES CANFIELD

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PREFACE

In the following pages an attempt is made to bring to light a forgotten movement in the literary history of our own language, and a forgotten phase of the renown of Racine and Corneille. It is comparatively well known that even during the Elizabethan period there were translations of French plays, and the success of Molière and Voltaire in English dress is an old story. But most Englishmen, even those who know and admire Racine and Corneille in their own tongue, would deny that they ever played any part on the English stage. Most Frenchmen, even those fully aware of the importance of French translations in German theatrical literature, would be surprised to learn that there was a time when plays by Racine and Corneille enjoyed the greatest popularity in London. However, such are the facts. The movement (it is so small an activity that it scarcely deserves the name of school) has passed

completely out of sight; but such as it was, it did exist, and cannot have existed without exerting an appreciable influence. This study of the translations of Racine and the two Corneilles into English is, however, held strictly within the limits of its title. The influence of French drama upon the English stage is both too extensive and too vague a matter to be set down in a chronological and historical way, and too well known to need emphasizing; but the careful collection and study of the concrete examples of English deference to French taste in this one certain direction has not been undertaken before, and ought to be worth the doing as furnishing a reliable basis for further generalization.

The translations are treated chronologically, in all but a few instances, as this seems the most satisfactory way of arranging them. The translations of *Athalie* are discussed together, as they are quite separated in spirit and general result from the others. Comparatively little space is given to them, because the life of the great French tragedy writers on the English stage is the real subject of this study, and the religious dramas were never regarded by English people as stage possibilities. The reason for this is quite obvious when the dif-

ference in the attitude of the two nations toward religion is considered.

The collection of translations has been carried down to the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century only, as after that time all the English versions were merely literary exercises. The motive prompting the work had completely changed. English renderings of foreign masterpieces may be said to be sincere translations only when the motive of the translator is to make it possible for the general public, reading no language but English, to know the foreign work in as perfect an English reproduction as he can make. When he produces his work with no such idea, but addresses himself to a small circle who know both languages and can make comparisons, meaning to exhibit his dexterity in manufacturing English verse out of French, he is performing a literary *tour de force* only, and his production has nothing in common with the sincere translation which forms the material studied here.

There has been no attempt to collect and classify small and unimportant thefts from the French which abound in English theatrical literature, or to set down the instances where single scenes or characters are taken from Ra-

cine and Corneille and used in an English setting. There is a certain interest in minute investigation of this sort, but such use of the French was always underhanded and as a rule unrecognized. For a study which attempts to ascertain the real life of these three French dramatists in England such fragmentary and elusive appearances have no significance. Consequently such relations as that existing between Mrs. Centlivre's *Love at a Venture* and Thomas Corneille's *Le Galant Doublé* have not been touched upon. The treatment of *Le Menteur* is, in portions, an exception to this rule, admitted partly because this is a much more important comedy, and partly to make complete the story of its long life in England.

Foot-notes have been made as full as seemed necessary, but page and volume references to works arranged alphabetically have been omitted unless the quotation given is not under its natural heading in the work. Accordingly, references to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Baker's *Biographica Dramatica*, Jacob's *Poetical Register*, catalogues in general, and similar works, are given without stating volume and page. The editions used are stated in the Bibliography.

It is a pleasure as well as a duty to express

here my thanks for the courteous treatment and helpful suggestions of the officials of the British Museum, of the Yale University Library, and of the Columbia University Library; also my gratitude to Professor Thomas R. Lounsbury for valuable advice, to Professor Adolphe Cohn for the suggestion of my theme and for sympathetic criticism, and to Professor Henry A. Todd for help in reading proofs.

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I. RUTTER'S CID

THE Restoration marks the real beginning of the life of the two great French dramatists[1] in English literature and on the English stage. However, there is a curious and little-known incident of theatrical history during the reign of Charles I. which shows that the interest in French plays, which is so prominent a feature of his son's time, was a development sudden only in appearance. In reality, the close relations existing between the French and English courts during the reign of Charles I. was already preparing the way for the invasion of the English stage by the numberless translations and imitations from the French which fill the literary annals of the Restoration.

The French queen of Charles I. was undoubtedly responsible for a great deal of the interest felt in French plays at this time. As

[1] Unless Thomas Corneille is specifically mentioned reference is always to Pierre Corneille.

early as 1629 there are records of a company of French actors performing in turn at three of the London theatres. The plays were presented in the original, and their production in London may be almost surely connected with the Queen's French sympathies. Herbert's *Licenses of Acting Plays* has this notice, on the 17th of February, 1635: "French company being approved of by the Queen at her house two nights before and commended by her majesty to the King, acted *Melise*, a French comedy. . . ."[1] This reference to the Queen's interest in the theatre, and to her influence with the King, is noteworthy. The violent punishment of Prynne shows that the Queen's taste for the theatre was a fact to be reckoned with in the society of that time. It will be remembered that he wrote a virulent diatribe against playhouses and players as direct agents of the devil. One of the charges made against him was slandering the Queen. The objectionable passage in his book was one abusing all women actors or singers, in spite of the well-known fact that the Queen was fond

[1] Fleay's *Chronicle History of London Stage*, Chap. 6, Sect. D. S. 339.

of taking part in Court Masques. Prynne was deprived of his University degree, set in the pillory, and imprisoned.[1]

The most significant fact in connection with this lively interest of the Queen in the theatre in general, and in French plays in particular, is the date of the first translation of the *Cid*, which is also the first translation from Corneille into English.[2]

It is a well-authenticated fact that this translation of the *Cid* was undertaken at the command of the Earl of Dorset, Lord Chamberlain to the Queen.

This Earl of Dorset was a thorough French scholar, as may be learned from the dedication of this early translation of the *Cid*, and also from the fact that he was twice ambassador to the court of Louis XIII. There was among his dependents one Joseph Rutter, who was tutor to his son. To this presumably learned man, though, as the translation shows,

[1] Green's *History of the English People*, p. 528. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1888.

[2] The *Melise* spoken of might be identified with Corneille's *Melite*, were it not that, in 1633, a Pastorale Comique called *La Melize* was produced in Paris. Mulert conjectures with much probability that this was the one given in England.

lacking in poetic talent, the translation of the *Cid* was intrusted. Of this translation, Baker, in the *Biographica Dramatica*, says: "When executed it was so well approved by the King, to whom it was shown, that at his Majesty's own desire the second part of the same piece was put into Mr. Rutter's hands with an injunction to translate it, which he immediately obeyed." [1] One might not see in this anything noteworthy beyond a further proof of the interest of the English Court in French tragedy were it not for the date of the translation, which is given clearly in the British Museum copies as *January* 26, 1637 (O.S.). Now the date of the French privilege is given as the 21 *Janvier*, 1637 (N.S.),[2] while the play was not actually printed until March 23, 1637 (N.S.). These dates establish the curious and significant fact that Corneille's epoch-making play was printed in English as soon as in French.

It has never been possible to determine the exact date of the first representation of *Le Cid*

[1] This "Second part of the *Cid*" is a translation of *La vraie Suite du Cid, de l'abbé Desfontaines*, 1637. The English translation was published in 1640, and as late as 1699 is still cited by Langbaine as a translation from Corneille.

[2] Picot, *Bibliographie Cornélienne*, p. 12.

in Paris. It is quite as impossible to ascertain when the English translation was first acted, but it must have been presented before it was printed, as the title-page reads, "The Cid a Tragicomedy, out of French made English: and acted before their Majesties at Court and on the Cockpitt Stage in Drury-lane, by the servants to both their Majesties."

This early date of the English production makes a different matter of the whole affair. For it almost certainly presupposes the fact that the Earl of Dorset obtained a manuscript copy of the *Cid* while the play was still the very latest novelty and sensation in Paris. This in its turn indicates on his part an attention to theatrical affairs in Paris far keener than would be shown by the simple translation of a printed book that might be easily obtained in London from any returned traveller. With all the immense advance in means of communication between France and England, it would have been surprising if *Cyrano de Bergerac* had been translated and played in London before it was printed in Paris.

In regard to the partiality of the Queen for French dramatic literature, it must be remem-

bered that at this time the English stage was not in a condition to arouse any enthusiasm in even the most broad-minded of French women. Shakespeare was gone. Ben Jonson's pedantic severity, the horrors of the tragedy of that time and the grossness of the comedy, were not attractive qualities to one fresh from Paris. It can well be imagined that the Earl of Dorset was heartily thanked for his prompt transference of the French masterpiece to London, and that the worthy Joseph Rutter went back to his translation of the "Second part of the *Cid*" with a heart warmed by the praises of his patron. It must also have been a delight to him (if he was aware of it) that Corneille himself secured a copy of his work and valued it highly. Jusserand says, "Il (Corneille) possédait toutefois une traduction anglaise du Cid, et s'en faisait gloire : c'était une grande curiosité."[1]

As this is the first translation from Corneille made into English and as it kept its place on the stage for many years, and later, almost a century later, had the honor to be pirated under the name of another author, it is worth while to

[1] Jusserand, *Shakespeare en France*, p. 91.

examine it. In view of the circumstances surrounding the inception of the translation, the dedication and the preface are interesting. The former is written in the usual flattering style of the time. The following passage is evidently a reference to the fact that the author wrote for the King and Queen. "To give your Lordship a testimony of my readiness to obey you, I no sooner was commanded by you to translate this Poem than I went about it, and certainly your commands gave life to the work which else despaire of performance or the consideration to whom it must be presented would have stifled in its first birth." He gives an idea of the difficulty he found in accomplishing his task, thus — "For how could I hope anything from mine owne suficiencie being little exercised in the French tongue and finding such a contumacy in their phrase to our manner of speaking." Here Joseph Rutter speaks once for all the feeling of the long line of translators of Corneille of which he is the first. This "contumacy" of the French tongue is very evident to a reader of his translation, though it does not seem to have diminished the admiration of his contemporaries for his work.

In his "Preface to the Reader" he speaks again of the difficulties he has encountered, "I have followed close both the sense and the words of the Author, but many things are received wit in one tongue which are not in another." One's heart warms to the pedagogue when, later on, he speaks with so much appreciation of the good qualities of the original. "The Playe it selfe . . . I would willingly propose to be imitated of our undertakers in the like kinds, I meane for the conveyance and (as I may call it) the Oeconomy of it: for what concerns the wit and natural expressions in it I know I speak to deafe people whose ears have been furr'd with so many hyperboles which is the wit in fashion though the same in Seneca's days were accounted madness. But if they knew how dissenting with a right eare any affected speech is, they would rather trespasse the other way and not straine nature beyond what we find it commonly is."

Although his English is somewhat confusing here, this comment on the literary fashion of his day and on the merits of the *Cid* shows a sound taste in Rutter which cannot have been common among the men of letters of that day.

In one direction at least it also promises well for his translation, namely, that he will not attempt, as have so many later translators, to enliven the monotony of the French stage (as they put it) by introducing exaggerated bombast in the English style.

That Rutter was not merely the conscientious scholar one is likely to think him, is shown by his conclusion to the preface. He stops short in his criticism of the lack of taste shown by his countrymen, and takes himself to task: "But this is no fit Porch for the Temple of Love. I'le shut it up and open for you the pleasant way into which you had rather enter."

One is prepared for a most favorable view of his translation, knowing that Rutter was a serious man of learning and reading this agreeably modest preface; but an impartial examination shows it to be a mediocre performance, with flashes of excellence. It has negative virtues, which recur to the mind in reading some of the absurdly inelegant translations of later days; but the positive literary merit is slight.

An example of one of the best passages is

the following translation of the famous scene of the blow (Act I. Scene 3) :

Count. Take that, rash Dotard for thy impudence!
Don Diego. Nay, make it up and after this affront
Take my life too.
Count. What dost thou hope to do, thou feeble foole?
Thy sword is mine and yet I scorn to take it.
Goe now and bid the Prince read o're thy life
And let him not omit this part of it
In which hee'le finde the just revenge I take
Of this thy insolence a faire example.[1]

It will be seen in this passage that Rutter does not attempt a word-for-word, nor even a line-for-line, translation. Any such feat of linguistic agility would have been far beyond his powers. When he cannot crowd into one line all that Corneille has in one, he leaves out

[1] *Le Comte.* Ton impudence
Téméraire vieillard, aura sa récompense.
D. Diegue. Achève, et prends ma vie après un tel affront,
Le premier dont ma race ait vu rougir son front.
Le Comte. Et que penses-tu faire avec tant de faiblesse?
D. Diegue. O Dieu! ma force usée en ce besoin me laisse!
Le Comte. Ton épée est à moi; mais tu serais trop vain,
Si ce honteux trophée avait chargé ma main.
Adieu: fais lire au Prince, en dépit de l'envie
Pour son instruction l'histoire de ta vie;
D'un insolent discours ce juste châtiment
Ne lui servira pas de petit ornement.

the rest or trails it into the following line. But it is also evident that he has thoroughly understood his original, and that with a fair degree of success in happy passages like the one quoted, he has been able to reproduce the spirit and fire of Corneille.

But given the problem of reproducing the intricate rhythm and rhyme and the rhetorical power of a passage like the celebrated monologue of the hero at the end of the first act, poor Rutter's moderate talents fail utterly. As an example of his worst style, the following limping prosaic blank verse stands as a pitiable contrast to the polish and strength of the original:

> Strooke to the very heart, with a blow as fatall
> As unforeseen: what shall I doe? I must
> Revenge my father and provoke my mistress.
>
> If I revenge my father I must lose
> My love: if not I must live infamous.
> How can I live, having lost all I live for?

It were unnecessary cruelty to point out all the blemishes in this example of what Rutter could do when he was at his worst.

Another fault of Rutter's is poetic shortness of breath. Many a passage starts out well,

but ends in a gasp with a line outrageously false. This is especially noticeable where Corneille's rhetoric begins to soar, which is, of course, a frequent occurrence. In continued narrative or in calm speeches like those of the King or Elvire, this translator is safer, but in a burst like the following how his powers fail him! (Act II. Scene 8.)

Chimena. My father's slaine, Sir and these eyes have seene
His bloud gush out in bubles: that dear bloud
Which has so oft preserved your wals, so oft
Been fir'd to gaine you battailes and which yet
Reakes with just anger to have been spilt for any
But you, the King.[1]

This was the translation received with such pleasure by the King and Court. There is no doubt about its success on the stage. As shown in the title-page it was played at Court

[1] Sire, mon père est mort: mes yeux ont vu son sang
Couler à gros bouillons de son généreux flanc;
Ce sang qui tant de fois garantit vos murailles,
Ce sang qui tant de fois vous gagna des batailles,
Ce sang qui tout sorti fume encore de courroux
De se voir répandu pour d'autres que pour vous.

It will be noticed that this is a very faithful translation, and more nearly a line-for-line rendering than Rutter is usually able to accomplish.

and at the Cockpit, and its popularity is attested by the fact that in 1650, eight years after the theatres were closed by act of Parliament, there was demand enough for it to warrant the appearance of a second edition. It is true that Langbaine,[1] from the lofty eminence of fifty years more of dramatic progress, says of it with condescension in 1691, "To speak of the translation in general, I think if the time be considered when it was undertaken, it may pass muster with candid readers." But we have evidence that in spite of this judgment Rutter's translation held the stage as late as 1662; for Pepys notes under date of December 1, 1662, twenty-six years after the first appearance of the play, "I saw *The Valiant Cid* acted, a play which I have read with great delight, but it is a most dull thing acted which I never understood before: there being no pleasure in it though done by Betterton and by Yanthe and another fine wench." As a literary critic Pepys is not very reliable, and his censure probably need have little weight. But the information he gives is highly interesting. He had read the play many times, and had

[1] *Account of English Dramatic Poets*, p. 431.

evidently heard but not understood criticisms of it as a play for the stage. Betterton, the greatest actor of his period, chose it as one of his rôles, and it was given to an audience made up of the highest in English society of the time, as is shown by some gossip Pepys retails on the same date. Rutter's blank verse must have been very much out of fashion at that time, which makes the production of his play all the more a proof of the enduring admiration which his work had secured, and of the fact that he had not been lost to sight even during the Commonwealth, so dreary a time to playwrights and actors.

The distressing circumstances of the Civil Wars put an end to most literary activity and especially to writing for the stage. The playhouses were closed, the actors went into the King's army, and the playwrights were absorbed in one way and another in the struggles of the times. Sir John Denham, in the dedication of a volume of verse and translations to Charles II., says of this period, and of his own reasons for not having written during the Civil Wars, "That time was too hot and busie for such idle Speculations, but after I had the good

fortune to wait upon your Majesty in Holland and France you were pleased sometimes to give me Arguments to put off and divert the evil hour of our Banishment, which now and then fell not short of your Majesty's Expectation." This passage may be said to sum up the influence of the exile of the Royalists upon the subject of translations from Corneille and Racine.

Although at first glance the period of Puritan rule in England might be thought the last epoch likely to encourage French influence, in reality it probably contributed much to it. In the first place, there was the reaction that was bound to come after the severity and narrowness of Puritan ways of thought. Then, the people of rank and culture, very many of them, were living in exile in France, Holland or Flanders. Those who were still in England had retired to their country houses, refused to take any part in public life, and turned their eyes toward France as the dwelling-place of many of their friends and as the possible source of aid for their party. Even during the Civil War gentlemen of leisure were making the grand tour as slowly as possible, to keep out of the uncomfortable quarrels at home.

John Evelyn and the poet Waller, with a party of Englishmen, travelled together for some time. Waller indeed had barely escaped from the Puritans with his life. He finally returned to Paris and kept open house in so brilliant a manner that he soon drew about him the most distinguished men and women of that capital. The publisher of the Duke of Buckingham's *Rehearsal* says in his remarks to the reader, giving it as one of the literary advantages of the Duke, "By travel he had the opportunity of observing the Decorum of foreign Theatres; especially the French under the regulation of Monsieur Corneille." The young Prince was half French by birth, and certainly not inclined by circumstances to have any great fondness for the English. Children who were too young when their parents left England to have been under the influence of English taste were growing up in French schools and in French surroundings. The French stage was in a position of undisputed authority and in all the freshness of the first glow of its golden period. Corneille stood unapproached by any rival, and of all French tragic poets he is the one most calculated to inspire admiration in the English

mind. His greatest plays were all written at that time, and his force and power and lofty dignity were eminently calculated to prevent British minds from dwelling on the un-English details of rhymed Alexandrines and the observance of the unities.

His spirit and fire and heroic strength are qualities much more sympathetic to English minds and much more likely to excuse the limitations of French tragedy than Racine's melting passion, which seems sentimental gallantry to the beef-eating type of Englishman, or his constant elevation of thought and perfection of style, which are monotonous and tiresome to most British taste.[1] There is much in Corneille to appeal to even conventional English minds and little to repel them. To the Gallicized courtiers of Charles II. he must have seemed as great a man as to the followers of Louis XIV. The only notable translation from Corneille made during the Restoration, after the appearance of *Andromaque* in Paris, was Charles Cotton's *Horace*, which appeared

[1] Only *La Thébaïde* and *Andromaque* had been published before the height of the translation period in England was passed.

in 1671. The important part of the work of Mrs. Philips, Waller, and Denham was published before Racine's name was known, so that the development of classic tragedy most completely French was unknown to the English admirers of that form of composition. This fact must be taken into account in explaining the enthusiasm for it which existed at that time.

The French Court possessed in its stability, prosperity, and clearly defined position all that the scattered, impecunious Cavaliers wished for their King, and they came to regard it as an ideal in all respects. The great writers who were its lights were looked upon as models.

The general condition, then, was that during the Commonwealth the Cavaliers at home had more leisure than usual to spend on such "idle Speculations," as Sir John Denham put it, and the Royalists abroad found themselves in an atmosphere of keen and intelligent interest in literary and dramatic affairs.[1] All this was preparing the ground for translations from the two greatest French dramatists.

[1] It is of interest in this connection to notice that Dutch translations of Corneille — especially of the *Cid* — enjoyed a considerable popularity in Holland at this time.

II. DURING THE COMMONWEALTH

Not only did these conditions prepare the way for the translations of the Restoration, but they created a feeling so strong that even in those troublous times there were found admirers of French taste enthusiastic enough to undertake the work without waiting for more peaceful days.

The first attempt was made in 1654, at the height of Puritan fanaticism. There appeared that year a little book with the following title, "*The Extravagant Sheepherd — A Pastorall Comedie Written in French by T. Corneille Englished by T. R.*" This T. R. is as completely hidden behind his initials now as ever. Fleay[1] has no conjecture, and Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) says, "There is no author who wrote about that time whose name would suit these initials excepting Thomas Rawlins.[2]

[1] *Chronicle History of the London Stage.*

[2] This Thomas Rawlins was principal engraver to the mint in the reign of both Charles I. and II. He was a friend of

Yet without further concomitant circumstances I cannot think myself authorized to father this play upon him."

There is a very quaintly worded dedication to "The most virtuous Lady Mrs. Joanna Thornhill" in which he begs her protection for this "Innocent Stranger, who durst not venture abroad without it. Such is his Innocency that in this habit he might without Gaule to the Spectator have entered the Theatre (had not the Guilty Ones of this Age broken that Mirror lest they should there behold their own horrible shapes represented)."

The Halliwell-Phillipps Dictionary[1] says of this dedication, "In it the author appears to intimate that the comedy had been unsuccessfully performed in its English dress." The passage above quoted is the only one which speaks of anything but the virtues of Mrs. Thornhill, and it would be hard to deduce from this anything but indignation at the Puritan

the literary men of his day, and it seems from all the facts of the case that it is not improbable that he did indeed bring Thomas Corneille into English. But the cautious Baker is undoubtedly right in saying that it is unsafe to attempt to pierce the veil of anonymity which still covers T. R.

[1] *Dictionary of Old English Plays.*

restrictions on the stage. It is true that there were performances given even during the period of Puritan rule, but these were done in the greatest privacy and away from London. Sir William D'Avenant's cautious opening at Rutland House with declamation and music did not come until 1656, two years later than the date of the *Extravagant Sheepherd*, and even he did not venture to give plays complete until 1658. So that it seems very likely that T. R.'s *Pastorall Comedie* was printed before it was ever acted.

The work itself is a very interesting attempt. The honesty of the translator in giving so clearly his original is in pleasing contrast to the lack of candor — to call it by no harsher name — of his immediate successor in translation. T. R. has produced as exact an "Englishing," to use his own term, as his capacity allowed. The Dramatis Personæ are exactly the same, and, what is a little unusual, they are given in the order of the original. Nothing is put in, nothing is left out, and even the stage directions are literally translated. The actual merit of the work is slight, but the verses are not disagreeable. The soliloquy of *Lycis* in the first

scene is done in rhyme, but this seems to have exhausted all the author's facility in this direction; for the rest is in blank verse, of which a fair sample of the best is the following passage (Act IV. Scene 3):

> *Charita.* And why should love in this our age in us
> Be weakness and a virtue in the men?
> Why should we blush at our so faultless flames?
> Do we want eyes to see or hearts to love?

This is not bad for second-rate versification, and is infinitely better than the work of the author next in chronological order, — Sir William Lower, who wrote two translations of this period.

Lower was a Cornishman by birth and a cousin of the well-known physiologist, Dr. Lower. He went to Oxford for a time, but showing no desire for serious study he travelled abroad, especially in France. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says that he had the reputation of being a perfect master of the French tongue, — a reputation which a reader of his translations will certainly consider unfounded. After his return to England he became so deeply involved in the Civil Wars (he was an ardent Royalist) that he was compelled again to visit

the continent where, as Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) puts it, "being strongly attached to the Muses, he had an opportunity of enjoying their society and pursuing his studies." His cousin, Dr. Lower, made a remark about him that seems to satisfy the feelings of the reader of his translations more than either of the above-quoted authorities. Some one asked him his opinion of his literary cousin. "Sir," said the doctor, "he is an ill poet and a worse man." If he was a worse man than his translations of *Horace* and *Polyeuctes* show him to have been a poet, the Puritans certainly lost nothing by his being of the opposite party.

Nowhere in either of these two plays does he give any credit to Corneille. The title-page of the first reads, *Polyeuctes, Or the Martyr, a Tragedy by Sir William Lower*, 1655; and the second, *Horatius, A Roman Tragedy by Sir William Lower*, 1656; which method of announcing a translation is certainly lacking in frankness. There might seem to be a possibility that he thought, in the case of two such well-known plays as these, that it was not necessary to give the author's name, sure to be known without explicit statement. But this charitable

judgment is proved impossible by the way his work was received by critics and theatrical historians. Langbaine in two of his works,[1] the *Biographica Dramatica*,[2] and even an authority as late as Genest[3] give *Polyeuctes* as an original work of Lower's. This is singular, as a more literal translation could scarcely be imagined. It is quite baldly faithful.

It is not necessary to examine both of these plays, as they are exactly similar in lack of merit. *Horatius* may be chosen as a little the worse; and this is an inducement to look at it, for at his worst Lower is so bad as to be highly entertaining. The printing is even more careless than is usual in books of that time, and the spelling more erratic. The lines do not begin with capital letters, which detail gives a singular air of illiteracy to the pages. This feature is really in keeping with the nature of the work, however, as the lines seem in many cases to be nothing but prose cut up into uncertain lengths. He is said to have become a perfect master of the French tongue. This may not be contradicted with absolute

[1] *Account*, 1691, and *Lives*, 1699. [2] Baker, 1764.
[3] *Some Account*, Vol. X. p. 68.

certainty, as we possess nothing of his written in French; but he is no master of his own tongue, as may be seen from translations like the following. He translates *mêlée*, referring to a battle, as *mixture*, which is quite deliciously absurd, and he understands *faiblesses d'un grand cœur* to mean *imbecility*. (Act IV. Scene 2.)

Horace. When can I smother in my close embracements
The error wherewith I form'd such false sent'ments?[1]

Such examples of his carelessness and lack of form are innumerable and may be found on every page. His style may be judged from the following samples, from the last scenes of Act Second.

Father I do beseech you entertain
these passionate Women; above all things see
they come not forth, their troublesome affection
would come with glory from their eyes and tears
to interrupt our combat and what they
do to us would with justice do; we may be
perhaps suspected of this evil artifice.[2]

---

[1] Quand pourrai-je étouffer dans tes embrassements
L'erreur dont j'ai formé de si faux sentiments?

[2] Mon père, retenez ces femmes qui s'emportent
Et de grâce empêchez surtout qu'elles ne sortent.
Leur amour importun viendrait avec éclat
Par des cris et des pleurs troubler notre combat;
Et ce qu'elles nous sont ferait qu'avec justice
On nous imputerait ce mauvais artifice.

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This is absolutely unintelligible without consulting the French. As an example of his best, his rendering of the heroic old Roman's *Qu'il mourût!* may be given:

> What! I would have him dye; a brave dispaire
> Would perhaps have assisted him had he
> Deferred his defeat a minute longer.[1]

Which tame reproduction of the fiery original seems really good when compared with the rest of the play.

Dr. Mulert says that it is not probable that either of these plays was ever presented on the stage, because they were written five and six years before the reopening of the theatres, and because they are so poor as to make it unlikely they could find any place on the stage where Dryden's powerful heroic couplets were the ideal. But when the translation of *Le Menteur* is examined, it will be seen that poor literary quality was, then as now, no hindrance to the presentation of a play nor to its success on the stage. The lack of merit in these translations, however,

[1] Qu'il mourût,
Ou qu'un beau désespoir alors le secourût.
N'eût-il que d'un moment reculé sa défaite,
Rome eût été du moins un peu plus tard sujette;

and the fact that probably none of the three ever attained any prominence, does not prevent their appearance from having considerable significance. That they found publishers and readers in times when society was perturbed and inimical to such productions, shows that the translators of the Restoration found an audience not unprepared to appreciate their work.

III. THE MATCHLESS ORINDA

The reign of Charles II. was the golden period for translations from French tragedies. The reasons for their success are so obvious as to be scarcely worth repeating, although there were several factors in the situation, not usually recognized. The immense popularity of all things French at this time has been emphasized too often to be mentioned again, were it not for the fact that it is usually attributed merely to the wish to flatter the King by imitating his tastes. Such passages as the following in the dedication of one translation from the French have perhaps been given undue weight, in estimating the influence of the Court: "Though my humble respects to her Royal Highness prompted me to undertake a translation in verse *because she loves plays of that kind*, yet I presume not to beg her protection." (Carlell's *Heraclius*.) This is undoubtedly true to a great extent, but if the situation is critically examined it may be seen that the most complete

literary sycophancy cannot explain all the phenomena of the literary activity of that time.

After all, how did Charles acquire his French tastes? By living in and near France, by reading and hearing French masterpieces, by breathing in French influence during an impressionable period of his life. And in this programme, by how many exiled Englishmen he was followed! There is no reason to suppose that their tastes were any less sincerely and genuinely French than his. Their efforts to introduce French ways of thought into English literature lose an element of artificiality if they are regarded as spontaneous and as a result of their own taste, even if this taste was an acquired one. If, as seems entirely probable, in a great number of cases the admiration of people of that day for French models was a genuine one and not actuated by a desire to follow Court fashions, one can but have more respect for their attempts to build English works with French material. This view of the part that French influence played in English literature during the Restoration serves also to explain the excellence of the translations from Corneille which appeared then; for they are the best in the language —

few of them poor and some of them admirable. To regard them as part of a movement wholly artificial, kept alive by deference to the opinions of one man, could not explain the loving care with which they are wrought nor the excellence to which they often attain. Another factor that deserves serious consideration in the analysis of the situation is the fact that stories — novels — were virtually unknown as early as this, and consequently plays were quite as much read as seen. People in all times have demanded the equivalent of stories; and before the introduction of the novel they took the form of literature most akin to stories, and read plays. This fact is very well known, but its importance in connection with the translations of the Restoration is greater than appears at first sight. It furnishes a key to the explanation of many phenomena which otherwise would be perplexing. The attempt of the translators of the Restoration was not primarily to make plays out of French tragedies, but English works of literature out of French masterpieces. It is true that they were acted — these translations — but the painstaking care with which they were written, the conscientious attempt to follow faith-

fully the original, and the effort for felicitous phrasing give evidence that the authors were prepared for a closer scrutiny of their labor than could be given while merely hearing their verses recited. They expected their works to be well and handsomely bound, to go into libraries, to be read and re-read, as they undoubtedly were. This is the keynote to the Restoration translations, and the great difference between them and the eighteenth-century translations.

The first translation to appear after Charles's return to England was one of the best and perhaps the most noted of all[1] — the translation of *Pompée*, by Mrs. Katharine Philips, "the matchless Orinda." Mrs. Philips is one of the prominent figures in the literary world of her day and one of the most interesting. Gosse has devoted a chapter in his *Seventeenth Century Studies* to her, where he makes the quaint, sentimental, industrious little lady a living being.

The facts of her biography, commonplace enough, are as follows: She was the daughter of a London family of no especial note, but which

[1] Throughout this Study general statements of this kind are to be interpreted as referring only to the works of the three authors under consideration.

gave her an excellent education. She was early interested in belles lettres, and when she married it was a great grief that her husband's means compelled them to leave London and go to live on his estates in Wales, far from the centre of literary activity. She paid frequent visits to Dublin during the time she lived in Wales, but these were her only opportunities to come in contact with the world she loved till 1664, when she was finally enabled to make a visit to London. She did this to try to advance her husband's interests, through the influence of some powerful friends whom she had won through her literary successes. It was a fatal journey, as, a short time after her arrival, she was taken ill with smallpox and died.

This separation from all those who were interested in the same things as she, has one good aspect to a student of Mrs. Philips's life. She became the most assiduous of letter-writers, and as many of her letters have been preserved, they form a valuable source of information about her life and work, and especially about her translations which were perhaps the most ambitious of her literary undertakings.

Dublin was at this time a brilliant edition of

London. The crowd of English people of rank and fashion connected in various ways with the government, whom the new order of things in Ireland had sent there, set themselves to reproduce in miniature the London life they had left. A fine new theatre was built, better than D'Avenant's in London, and the first really good one in Ireland. Society centred about the castle of the Lord-Lieutenant, who was the Duke of Ormond. The Earl of Orrery, a fine scholar and much devoted to French models, was Lord Chief Justice; and the Earl of Roscommon, so much praised by Pope and Dryden for his integrity and generosity, was another prominent figure in the society in which Mrs. Philips found herself during her visits to Dublin. Her correspondence gives vivid pictures of this world and shows it to have been one very favorable to such a project as her translation of *Pompée*. The brilliant, cultured people who ruled it regarded themselves as exiles, and felt that keen desire to keep in touch with the movements of the great world centres which characterizes exiles. They even exaggerated the prevailing literary fashions. French plays were received with favor in London — they were

received with enthusiasm in Dublin. Elaborate stage setting was coming into vogue in England; in Ireland the Lord Chief Justice gave out of his own pocket a hundred pounds for Roman and Egyptian costumes for Mrs. Philips's *Pompée*.

Translations of all kinds were in great favor, and there are constant references to them in Mrs. Philips's letters.[1] Such paragraphs as the following are of frequent occurrence: "My Lord Roscommon is a very ingenious Person of excellent natural parts and certainly the most hopeful young nobleman in Ireland. He has translated the Scene of *Care Selve Beate* in *Pastor Fido* very finely; in many places better than Sir Richard Fanshaw." "Above all forget not my request for your Temple of Death (a translation). And now I speak of that poem, what progress have you made in your translation from the Spanish?"

It was at the request of the Earl of Orrery himself that she completed her translation of *Pompée*, and naturally he was deeply interested

[1] The collection printed under the title of *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus* is the source of all quotations made from Mrs. Philips's letters.

in its success. Mrs. Philips had many misgivings about her tragedy when it was completed, and sent it post-haste (which was very slow haste at that time) to her Mentor, Poliarchus — Sir Charles Cotterell. The stir that was made about it seems to have alarmed her, and she could not rest till she had the opinion of her chief literary adviser. "I long to have your opinion of it for I fear I have murthered him more barbarously here than Achilles did in Egypt, and that my Lord Orrery's commands to me have prov'd no less fatal to him than the Orders that Ptolemy gave to that Assassin." The letter in which this passage is found was written the 22d of October, 1662, but not until the end of November did she have any reply from Sir Charles, owing to the bad system of posts and to terrible storms which drove back from the coast of Ireland all vessels attempting to make the crossing. Poliarchus evidently replied in the most flattering way, for her impatience at not hearing from him suddenly turns into the most grateful thanks for a favorable judgment. After that long delay, however, it would have been impossible to make any changes even if he had suggested them; for, she says,

"In spight of all I could do to prevent it many copies are abroad." She speaks in another letter of the rapid way her tragedy is gaining publicity, being copied over and over from the manuscript. The interest in it can be determined from this detail.

The representation must have been the great event in society during that winter (1663). The English gentry in Dublin had many hours of leisure and ample opportunity to think of every embellishment possible to add lustre to the production of their beloved Orinda's play. On the 10th of January, 1663, Mrs. Philips writes that songs between the acts are to be added, "done by the greatest Masters in England." Lord Roscommon himself wrote the Prologue, and Sir Edward the Epilogue. The grateful Orinda says of them, "They are the best writ that ever I read in anything of that kind." John Ogilby, manager of the new theatre, added dances to be given after the songs between the acts, and a Grand Masque was presented at the end. The performance was to be as dazzling as talent, ingenuity and money could make it. Mrs. Philips's letters run in a constantly ascending scale of enthusiasm

and anticipation, and it is with real regret that the expectant reader turns the page of the last letter before the performance and finds a gap of two months between that and the next one. It is an unequalled opportunity lost for Orinda to display her rhetoric, and brandish her somewhat aggressive modesty in the face of the admiring Poliarchus. She had written before that she submitted to have her play put on the stage only because she was forced to do so by her powerful and noble friends. Lord Orrery is "resolved to have *Pompey* acted here which, notwithstanding all my Intreaties to the contrary, he is going on with. All the other Persons of Quality here are also very earnest to bring it on the stage, and seem resolv'd to endure the Penance of seeing it played."

It may be that Mrs. Philips's modesty was too great to allow her to describe the success of the representation, for all evidence shows that it was brilliant and that she received an ovation. It is not hard to imagine the glow of the occasion or the flood of felicitations that must have poured in on the happy and glorified Orinda.

Mrs. Philips's next letter is dated the 8th of April. She speaks of sending a "packet of

printed *Pompeys*" to Sir Charles Cotterell for him to distribute. She wishes one bound and given to the Duchess, and "if you think the King would allow such a Trifle a Place in his Closet, let him have another." She speaks with much more confidence under her cover of self-depreciation and with the air of one who knows herself a personage. Evidently the translation has been the sensation of the day. "I have had many Letters and Copies of Verses sent me, some from my Acquaintances and some from Strangers to compliment me upon *Pompey*, which, were I capable of vanity would even surfeit me with it, for they are so full of Flattery that I have not the confidence to send them to you." Five hundred copies were printed in Dublin and soon all sold. Herringman, the London publisher, "has written me to give him leave to reprint it at London."

On the earlier pages of the large volume containing all her works, published in London in 1678, there are many pieces of verse addressed to Mrs. Philips. These are probably the ones to which she refers, and for once they deserve all that her excessive modesty feels about them — flattery could go no farther. One or two

examples will show their spirit. The Earl of Orrery says :

> The French to learn our language now will seek
> To hear their greatest wit more nobly speak,
> And all those wreaths once circled Pompey's brow
> Exalt his fame less than your verses now.
> From these clear truths all must acknowledge this,
> If there be Helicon in Wales it is.
> Oh, happy country which to our Prince gives
> His title and in which Orinda lives.

An unknown woman writes a long poem exalting Mrs. Philips to the skies :

> Pompey, who greater than himself's become
> Now in your Poem than before in Rome,
> He thanks false Egypt for its Treacherie
> Since that his Rime is sung by thee.
> If that all Egypt for to purge its Crime
> Were built into one Pyramid o'er him
> Pompey would lie less stately in that Herse
> Than he doth now, Orinda, in thy Verse.

The absurdly exaggerated form of these tributes is of course partly due to the taste of the time ; but, making every allowance, it indicates a very general and widespread admiration of Mrs. Philips's *Pompey ;* which upon taking up the translation itself is seen to be quite justified.

After the obscure translations which had preceded this effort of Mrs. Philips, one is quite dazzled by the stir her *Pompey* made in the literary world, and inclined to linger long over the agreeable incidents of success which form such a contrast to the silence which reigns concerning the translations made during the Commonwealth. All these flattering verses and the tribute which by common consent was paid to her, lead one to expect of her work either something quite above the common order, or to dread coming upon one of those melancholy wrecks which fill literary history — a favorite of the hour who, honored beyond measure by his contemporaries, is misled by flattery into a franker and franker disclosure of his mediocrity, exaggerates his bad qualities because he finds them unreproved, and leaves to posterity (judging him with cool heads) a reputation which would be pitiful were it not that as a rule he is so completely forgotten as even to escape ridicule. Mrs. Philips is neither forgotten nor ridiculous. True, she is not to us as to her contemporaries "the matchless Orinda," and some of her exaggerated expressions of literary bashfulness bring a smile to the lips of a

sceptical generation. But her two translations of *Pompée* and *Horace* are proofs of good judgment, taste, and real talent such as no one need be ashamed to leave behind him. The conscientious, well-trained literary worker is everywhere apparent, and the poet of undoubted talent shows herself if not on every page at least at crucial points.

This is the first rhymed version of a French tragedy made in English, and the ability with which Mrs. Philips handles the heroic couplet gives to the English a much closer resemblance to the French than blank verse can ever do. It would be difficult to think of Mrs. Philips's using blank verse in any work of this kind, for she seems to have imbued herself with the spirit of the original so thoroughly that the rhyme, an essential element in the French, would have come inevitably to her lips in translating. She was from the first a copious writer, much given to inditing extremely affectionate poems to her women friends, and her long practice in rhyming laments for her beloved Lucasia stands her in good stead in rendering the swelling Cornellian Alexandrines.

Any passage chosen at random will show the

conscientious fidelity of Orinda to her text; and passages chosen with only a little care will show that higher fidelity to the spirit of the original and success in reproducing it which make her the best of Restoration translators, and perhaps the best who ever translated French tragedy. (Act IV. Scene 4.)

> Oh, truly Roman heart
> And worthy Him of whom you were a part,
> His Soul which sees from its exalted State
> How I endeavor to revenge his Fate
> Forgets his hate and is become so kind
> To save my life by what he left behind.
> Whatever Treason could to Pompey do
> Yet he doth still subsist and act in you
> And prompts you to a thing so brave that he
> May vanquish me in generosity.[1]

There could scarcely be a translation more faithful. In one of her letters to Poliarchus Mrs. Philips sets up for herself the following

> [1] *César.* O cœur vraiment romain
> Et digne du héros qui vous donna la main!
> Ses mânes qui du ciel ont vu de quel courage
> Je préparais la mienne à venger son outrage,
> Mettant leur haine bas, me sauvent aujourd'hui
> Par la moitié qu'en terre il nous laisse de lui.
> Il vit, il vit encore en l'objet de sa flamme;
> Il parle par sa bouche, il agit dans son âme;
> Il la pousse, et l'oppose a cette indignité
> Pour me vaincre par elle en générosité.

ideal of Translation: "I think a Translation ought not to be us'd as Musicians do a ground with all the liberty of Descant, but as Painters when they copy." This is an ideal of fidelity which she has successfully realized in almost every instance. In the passage just quoted there is only one line where the translator has deviated in the slightest from a word-for-word rendering of Corneille, and yet she has reproduced his ten lines in ten of her own. An example of her power to reproduce the eloquence of her original with the very same shade of rhetorical grandeur is found in Act III. Scene 4, in Cornelia's Roman speech:

> How rude soever Fortune makes her blow,
> I Crassus's widow once and Pompey's now,
> Great Scipio's daughter (and what's higher yet)
> A Roman, have a Courage still more great.
> And of all strokes her cruelty can give
> Nothing can make me blush but that I live
> And have not follow'd Pompey when he dy'd;
> For though the means to do it were deny'd
> And cruel Pity would not let me have
> The quick assistance of a Steel or Wave,
> Yet I'm ashamed that after such a Woe
> Grief had not done as much as they could do.[1]

[1] *Cornelie.* De quelque rude trait qu'il m'ose avoir frappée

This passage — line-for-line, spirited rendering as it is — is not an example of Mrs. Philips's best work, as the rhymes are not as pure as she usually finds them.

If it did not smack too strongly of her circle of adoring friends, one might almost venture to say that in one or two places she has improved on Corneille. (Act IV. Scene 3.)

Cæsar. But yet my passion its own harm procures,
For I must quit you if I will be yours
While there are flying foes I must pursue,
That I may them defeat and merit you.
To bear that absence therefore suffer me
To take such courage from the charms I see
That frighted Nations may at Cæsar's name
Say, He but came and saw and overcame.[1]

Veuve du jeune Crasse et veuve de Pompée,
Fille de Scipion, et pour dire encore plus,
Romaine, mon courage est encore au-dessus ;
Et de tous les assauts que sa rigeur me livre,
Rien ne me fait rougir que la honte de vivre.
J'ai vu mourir Pompée et ne l'ai pas suivi ;
Et bien que le moyen m'en ait été ravi
Qu'une pitié cruelle à mes douleurs profondes
M'ait ôté le secours et du fer et des ondes,
Je dois rougir pourtant, après un tel malheur,
De n'avoir pu mourir d'un excès de douleur.

[1] *César.* Mais, las ! contre mon feu mon feu me sollicite.
Si je veux être à vous, il faut que je vous quitte.
En quelques lieux qu'on fuie, il me faut y courir,

Corneille has lost nothing at least, in the rendering of these last two lines.

It is not surprising that so good a piece of work was very popular, and it is with real satisfaction that one notes its continued success on the Irish stage. Later on it was played to delighted audiences in London. Ballard and Langbaine both speak of having heard it acted "with great commendation at the Duke of York's theatre as late as 1678."

The embellishments which the taste of that period added to it probably had something to do with its remaining on the stage; but its success as a book-play, as pure literature (together with the rest of Mrs. Philips's work), is attested by the fact that there were editions of her works published in 1667, in 1669, 1678, and 1710, four in all, covering a period of thirty-seven years after her death.

The translation of *Horace*, which was the last work of Mrs. Philips's life and which she left unfinished, was no less admirable than her

> Pour achever de vaincre et de vous conquérir.
> Permettez cependant qu'à ses douces amorces
> Je prenne un nouveau cœur et de nouvelles forces,
> Pour faire dire encore, aux peuples pleins d'effroi,
> Que venir, voir et vaincre, est même chose en moi.

Pompey. At the time of her death she had completed all but the last act, which was afterwards translated by Sir John Denham. The edition of her complete works published in 1667 does not contain the completed tragedy, but by 1669 the fifth act had been added. The sequence of these events aids in determining the date of the first presentation. Evelyn's invaluable testimony is another help. He writes on the 4th of February, 1668, "I saw the tragedy of *Horace* written by the virtuous Mrs. Philips acted before their Majesties." If this was not the first time, it must have been one of the first, as Denham died in March, 1668.

Sir John Denham was one of the popular poets of the Court, and the publishers of that time undoubtedly thought themselves very fortunate in securing his name for their edition of Mrs. Philips's complete works. As a matter of fact his method of translation was not suitable for a continuation of Mrs. Philips's work. It is smooth and flowing, but very much less exact and faithful. He gives himself no trouble to find a rendering of a difficult passage, but either omits it or uses swelling generalities which reproduce in no way the vigor

and precision of the original. The last edition of Mrs. Philips's works (published in 1710) seems to have found a very discriminating publisher, for he inserted in place of Sir John Denham's work the fifth act of Charles Cotton's *Horace*, which is much more in keeping with Orinda's general spirit of careful accuracy.[1] Much might be written about this second of Mrs. Philips's translated tragedies, but, in general, all that has been said of her *Pompey* applies equally to her *Horace* — it is a dignified, faithful, and spirited rendering of the French; in some respects better than the *Pompey*, for she seems to have more confidence and less constraint.

It was no less prosperous on the stage than *Pompey;* although there were no such picturesque incidents surrounding its first representation. The quotation already given from Evelyn, shows that it was in favor at Court. Langbaine says it was repeatedly "acted at Court by Persons of Quality," but he does not give an exact date. If it were not for that note in Evelyn's diary, an entry made by

[1] This change from Denham's fifth act to Cotton's has apparently passed unnoticed by most bibliographers.

Pepys would be misleading. He says, on the 19th of January, 1669, "To the King's House to see *Horace* this third day of its acting." He must mean of course the third of its run that year, for Evelyn's testimony is unequivocal. *Horace*, as well as *Pompey*, was enlivened by songs and dances between the acts, of which diversions Evelyn gravely says, "'Twixt each act a masque and antique daunce." Pepys, however, in his account makes remarks on the play and the *hors d'œuvre* with which it was served up, which are deliciously graphic in their delineation of one Englishman who was not under the domination of French taste. The picture he presents not only of his own ideas but of the concessions made to English taste is amusing beyond expression. After noting the play as quoted above, he says succinctly: "A silly tragedy; but Lacy hath made a farce of several dances, between each act one; his words are but silly and invention not extraordinary as to the dances; only some Dutchmen came out of the mouth and tail of a Hamburgh sow. Thence not much pleased with play." Probably no better picture of the common English audience of the period could

be drawn than is shown by these few remarks. Pepys is unmistakable when he shows them thus yielding to the French tastes of the gentry to the extent of considering it the proper thing to go to hear tragedies but welcoming gladly, as a rest from the monotony of a masterpiece like *Horace*, the antics of clowns.

Such unworthy companions would never have been thrust upon the exalted Romans of Corneille's play if Mrs. Philips had been alive to defend her work. It is true that there were songs and dances between the acts of *Pompey*, but that was a very different matter. They were of Mrs. Philips's own invention, and are quite dignified enough to be in harmony with the general atmosphere of the play. Moreover, they are linked to the action ; sometimes in the most naïve manner, it is true, but always with an idea of unity. "After the first act the King and Photin should be discovered sitting and hearing to this song." This is a harmless enough addition, and has nothing in common with the appearance of Dutch clowns from the head and tail of a sow, which so pleased the honest Pepys.

In spite of what has been said of the French

training of many of the nobility, during the exile of Charles II., it is evident that people in Pepys's station in life, except for a thin veneer were no less English than the similar class during the reign of Elizabeth. The gentry might be, and probably were, sincere in their admiration for translated French tragedy, but the people of the middle class no less sincerely disliked them.

IV. THE "PERSONS OF HONOUR"

ALL through Mrs. Philips's correspondence at the time of the production of her *Pompey*, there was a note of uneasiness about the reception which her translation would meet. This cannot be accounted for wholly by her usual self-depreciation, and was not without good ground. She seems to have known from the beginning of her undertaking that she was not the first in the field, for she writes to Cotterell on the 29th of August, 1662 (the summer before her translation was presented), "You will wonder at my Lord's Obstinacy in this desire to have me translate *Pompey*, as well because of my Incapacity to perform it as that so many others have undertaken it." She refers to a translation which appeared in 1664, with the title, "Pompey the Great," written by a group of authors vaguely designated as "certain Persons of Honour." Waller, the Earl of Dorset, Sir Charles Sedley, Sidney Godolphin, and Sir Edward Filmore are all said to

have worked together to perfect this translation, and they formed a brilliant company at that time, who had all the advantages of reputation and prestige at Court in their favor. Mrs. Philips must have known very well that the publication of their version of *Pompée* could not fail to make a great stir in literary circles. She seems to have been alarmed lest their work appear first; for on December 23d, 1662, she writes, urging the immediate presentation of a copy of her *Pompey* to the Duchess of York, "The other Translation done by so many eminent hands will otherwise appear first and throw this into everlasting obscurity: unless it gets as much the start of that in Time as it comes behind it in Merit." On October 19th, 1662, when she had just finished the first draft of her tragedy, she writes, "Artaban will soon bring you my translation of *Pompey* which I fear will not be deemed worthy to breathe in a place where so many of the greatest Wits have so long clubb'd for another of the same play."

These references show without doubt that it was a well-known undertaking. It is not impossible that Lord Orrery's eagerness to have

this tragedy translated and played in Dublin may have had in it an element of rivalry with London literary circles. If he had any notion of outdoing the Court in its own speciality, he must have derived much satisfaction from the outcome of the competition, for not only did his "matchless Orinda" complete her work eight months before the others, but she produced a more creditable translation. There seems to be little doubt that she realized her own superiority after she had recovered from the first feeling of alarm at the famous names of her rivals.

There is a difference of opinion among the authorities as to the complete list of collaborators working on this version, but two names at least are assured. No one doubts that Waller wrote the first act, and Charles Sackville the fourth. These were two great names at the Court of Charles II. Probably the critics of that year would have called Waller "the most polite poet of the time," and his sweet notes are still sounding faintly in our own day, audible even to those who make no special study of that period. In the biography of Sir Charles Sedley, preceding an

edition of his works published in 1722, there is a list of eminent men of letters at the Court, who were at the same time people of high birth. ". . . among the Gentry, Sir John Denham, Mr. Waller, Mr. Godolphin, Sir Henry Saville, Sir Fleetwood Shepherd, Mr. Butler, and Sir Charles Sedley." (Vol. I. p. 5.) Of these seven names, three are connected with the *Persons of Honour* translation; while Sir John Denham finished Mrs. Philips's *Horace* after her death. This is a larger proportion of authors interested in serious translations than would be found among a similar list of literary people of the present day.

Waller, Denham, and Sedley were among the bright literary lights of their day, and on this account it is interesting to observe the prominence given to translations in their works. Not only do they make many English versions of foreign poems themselves, but the titles in the collections of their "occasional verse" show that it was a common practice among their friends. Such titles as the following are not rare: "To his worthy Friend Sir Thomas Higgon, upon his translation of *The Venetian Triumph*"; "To his worthy friend Master Eve-

lyn, upon his translation of *Lucretius*"; "To Mr. Creech, upon his translation of *Lucretius*." St. Evremond's well-known letter to Corneille, quoted by Marty-Laveaux[1] is significant in this regard also: "M. Waller, un des beaux esprits du siècle attend toujours vos pièces nouvelles et ne manque pas d'en traduire un acte ou deux en vers anglais, pour sa satisfaction particulière."

The admiring way in which all critics of the day speak of Sir Richard Fanshawe's translation of Guarini's *Pastor Fido* is another instance of the seriousness with which such efforts were regarded. It all shows that an importance was attached to translation which is quite incomprehensible to modern minds.

To return to the enumeration of the composers of the particular translation under consideration — Waller, then, was a famous personage, and Sackville and Sedley were no less well known in their way. Sedley is noted among the comedy writers of the later Restoration, and Sackville, under the name of Lord Buckhurst, is a familiar figure to students of that time, although not so largely through his

[1] In his edition of Corneille's works, Vol. X. p. 499.

literary achievements as by his gay life. He is the Lord Buckhurst who was ranked by Pepys with Sedley as disgracefully riotous. In his later years he became more decorous and was noted for his generosity to literary folk. Of the other two authors little is known. Sir Edward Filmore is quite obscure, and Sidney Godolphin's connection is doubtful. He is not mentioned by Mrs. Philips as among the authors, but almost all literary historians include him in the list. Mulert[1] excludes him on the ground that a Sidney Godolphin died in 1643. There is his nephew of the same name, however, who at this time was just entering the Court as a young man, and who afterwards became a noted financier. In the full study of his life by the Honorable Hugh Elliot, it is stated that he spent his youth on the continent with Charles II. in exile, and returned with him to England. There is, therefore, no reason to say positively that he did not collaborate in the Englishing of *Pompée*, nor, on the other hand, does there appear to be more than a vague tradition that he did. At least, the translation which Mrs. Philips so much feared was

[1] Pierre Corneille auf der Englischen Bühne, p. 38.

undoubtedly written by a very distinguished company of "Gentry."

The number of hands at work on this tragedy did not finish it as soon as the single efforts of the industrious Orinda. It was probably not until October of 1663 (eight months after Mrs. Philips's had appeared on the stage) that *Pompey the Great* was acted; and the first edition was not published till 1664, sometime in the following year.

There are three epilogues and a prologue attached to it which have a certain interest in showing where the tragedy was performed. The prologue and one epilogue are as given "at the House." The second epilogue is "To the King at Saint James's," and the third "To the Dutchess at Saint James." These show that the tragedy was accorded the honor of presentation at Court. The versification of these productions is not at all remarkable, although they are smooth and flowing enough. There is one passage in the prologue which has a certain interest as showing the value accorded to *Pompée* in English minds, and explaining the curious prominence given it by these two famous translations:

> Who nothing will but what is Home-bred taste
> Must live content with Acorns and with Mast.
> For your Diversion we this Night present
> A fruit which grew upon the Continent;
> Of all that's French 'tis ranked among the best,
> And may prove better in our language dressed.

The three epilogues are all equally uninteresting, composed of the usual flowery compliments to the King and the ladies. The only reference which tells anything of the translation's fate is made in the opening lines of the Epilogue to the King :

> From Vulgar Wits that haunt the Theatre
> Pompey to you appealing (Royal Sir)
> Hopes for more Favour, as the Subject bears
> Better proportion to a Princes Ears.

This probably indicates that the success of the tragedy had not been extraordinary. We have a criticism of Pepys (written on June 23, 1666) showing that he did not like this any more than Mrs. Philips's tiresome *Horace*. He speaks of "*Pompey the Great*, a play translated from the French by several noble persons among others my Lord Buckhurst, that to me is but a meane play and the words and sense not very extraordinary." This is not quite so laconic as his

disposing of Orinda's *Horace* as "a silly tragedy," but its meaning is no less plain.

Mrs. Philips's comments on the work are interesting not only because they come from a rival, but because they are very sensible and discriminating. After the purely formal recognition of what she politely terms the superiority of the other translation, she makes one or two keen and penetrating criticisms[1] of their method of work which deserve to be printed in full. "I cannot but be surpriz'd at the great Liberty they have taken in adding, omitting, and altering the Original as they please themselves; This I take to be a Liberty not pardonable in Translators and unbecoming the Modesty of that attempt. For since the different ways of writing ought to be observ'd with their several Proprieties, this way of garbling is fitter for a Paraphrase than a Translation. What chiefly disgusts me is that the Sence most commonly languishes through three or four lines and then ends in the middle of the fifth." What this conscientious lady would have said of some of the eighteenth-century treatment of the French tragic poets is unimaginable.

[1] September 17, 1663.

In an undated letter[1] she speaks with rather more severity than is warranted. ". . . in the second and fourth Acts (which are all I have) unless the Parts acted were much reformed from this Copy, there are as many Faults as ever I saw in a good Poem. . . . the Rule that I understood of Translations till these Gentlemen informed me better was to write Corneille's sense as it is to be suppos'd Corneille would have done, if he had been Englishman, not confined to his Lines nor his Numbers (unless we can do it happily) but always to his Meaning." That Mrs. Philips was not only exacting of others but of herself is shown by an extract from a letter of December 11, 1662, where she refers to Poliarchus's criticism of her use of "effort." "I had it once in my mind to tell you that I was loth to use the Word Effort but not having Language enough to find any other Rhyme without losing all the Spirit and Force of the next Line and knowing that it has been naturalized at least these twelve years; beside that it was not us'd in that place in the French I ventur'd to let it pass." Naturally a translator who sets such a severe standard for

[1] *Letters from Orinda to Poliarchus*, pp. 81–82.

herself may be expected to find many faults in the loose and easy work of the somewhat self-satisfied poets constituting the Persons of Honour. To Mrs. Philips the translations of *Pompée* and *Horace* were the great literary events of her life; no exertion to make them perfect was too strenuous. Waller, Sedley, and Sackville regarded their work as an incident only, and were not disposed to trouble themselves too much over the details. They give a picture of their own attitude in the Epilogue to the King:

> They that translated this but practise now
> To improve their Muse and make her worthy you;
> That she may hereafter adorn the Stage
> With your own story.

This frame of mind can be divined before the translation itself is approached, and it is at once noticeable on opening the book at random.

To one who did not know the French, one tragedy would, perhaps, read as well as the other; but one who is looking for a reproduction of Corneille could not fail to find more satisfaction in Mrs. Philips's version. No better illustration of the difference between the two can be given than their treatment of the passage already

quoted in the discussion of Mrs. Philips's *Pompey* (p. 43).

The rendering of the *Persons of Honour* is as follows:

Expect not that their Rage should make me bow
To call you Lord, that Homage is below
Young Crassus, Pompey's Widdow, Scipio's Blood,
And what's yet more a Roman born, how should
I stoop to that who am so much above
The power of Fortune in my Birth and Love?
For Life, 'tis that I Blush to own, that I
Could stay behind when I saw Pompey dye;
Though Pity with rude Force impos'd restraint
From Steel or Waves, it is my shame to want
Those borrowed helps for loss of such a Friend,
Excess of Grief should Lingering Torments end.

Mrs. Philips's version (*q.v.*) is in this passage, as most places, incomparably better.

Young Crassus, Pompey's Widdow, Scipio's Blood
And what's yet more a Roman born, how should . . . .

is not only a much less intelligible translation of the original than that of the "Matchless Orinda," but it misses entirely the force of the brief, emphatic *Romaine* of Corneille, placed at the beginning of the line. Mrs. Philips's scrupulous care results in the reproduction of rhetorical devices of this sort which add very

greatly to the value of her translation. The two lines which follow this passage in the *Persons of Honour* translation are padding pure and simple, there being no foundation for them in the text. The entire force of the line translated "Excess of Grief should lingering torments end" is lost by its conversion to a general statement. The careless translators have been blind to the beauty of *pitié cruelle* so faithfully reproduced by Mrs. Philips, and have turned it into commonplace with "Though Pity with rude Force impos'd restraint . . ." The same characteristics of inexact and careless rendering of passages which should have received the most anxious attention are to be found throughout this translation.

On analysis, many of the criticisms rising to one's mind in the treatment of this translation are found to come from a comparison with Mrs. Philips's. In other words, if she had not written, this work would assume a much higher rank. Its smooth, flowing versification and the easy mastery of form which is shown at least in the first and fourth acts, make it a most agreeable production. It is a little hard to be sure of the fate of this *Pompey* on the stage, as

it is sometimes impossible to distinguish in the scanty theatrical records of the time between this and Mrs. Philips's. But it seems probable that it soon disappeared from the theatre and took its place in libraries as a book-play.

A translator, who, although producing an English version of Corneille during the Restoration, really belongs to an earlier period, is Lodowick Carlell, an old follower of Charles I. Dibdin[1] speaks of him as "Carlell, who, that he might resemble most of the favorites of Charles, was a complete courtier and an indifferent writer." Later he disposes of the tragedy under consideration by saying, "*Heraclitus* was a translation from Corneille." The real title reads, *Heraclius, Emperour of the East. A Tragedy written in French by Monsieur de Corneille Englished by Lodowick Carlell Esq.* (London, 1664.) In his preface, which he calls "The Author's Advertisement," he makes a most confused and confusing statement in regard to the way in which his tragedy was treated: "Another Translation formerly design'd (after this seem'd to be accepted of) was perfected and acted, this, not returned to me until that very

[1] *History of the English Stage*, Vol. IV. p. 129.

day." It would be difficult to understand exactly what he meant by this without any further complication, but there is another element of confusion introduced by the fact that there has been preserved no trace of any other translation of *Heraclius*. At least, if there was another it was never printed; and this would seem improbable, as we have several notes of Pepys bearing testimony to the undoubted success of some *Heraclius* acted at about this time. On the 8th of March, 1664, he writes: "The play hath one very good passage well managed in it about two persons pretending and yet denying themselves, to be son to the tyrant Phocias, and yet heir of Maronicius to the crowne. The garments like Romans very well. . . . But at the beginning, at the drawing up of the curtain, there was the finest scene of the Emperor and his people about him, standing in their fixed and different postures in their Roman habits, above all that I ever saw at any of the theatres." Three years later (September 4, 1666) he writes, "Soon as dined my wife and I out to the Duke's Playhouse and there saw *Heraclius*, an excellent play, to my extraordinary content, and the more

from the house being very full and great company." He speaks again of seeing it for the third time. There seems to be little doubt that an English *Heraclius*, whether it was Carlell's or not, had a success in London that seems out of proportion to the welcome given in general to translated French tragedy. It may be that the involved and complicated plot, which is usually considered a blemish in this work of Corneille's, appealed to an audience which found the simpler and more classic tragedy "silly," as Pepys called *Horace*. Probably also the play was elaborately staged, and every use made of the opportunity for attractive costumes. What is curious about the popularity of this tragedy (if this was indeed not Carlell's) is that it should have been kept always in manuscript, when the sorriest attempts at reproduction of French masterpieces received the recognition of the press. There could scarcely be a translation made which would not be as good as Carlell's. It is possible, however, that he insisted upon the publication of his effort out of pique at its refusal by the stage-manager. It was evidently a complete surprise to him, for he had gone so far as to prepare a prologue which he publishes

at the head of his play. This is written with the same incoherence which characterizes the preface, but is interesting because, after the manner of prologues, it throws some light on the dramatic fashions of the time. There is a contemptuous reference to the sort of foolery between the acts of serious French tragedy which Pepys found so diverting:

> A Song, a Dance; nay if an Ape were shown
> You'd cast your Caps but lest you them should loose
> Some in good husbandry their hands mis-use.
> This bold digression thrust in by the Way,
> Too oft the By exceeds the Main; the Play.
> What's French you like, if vain, exceed their height;
> What's solid, Worthy, too few imitate;
> But we have those, when they Things serious write
> May give them Patterns, You, more just delight.

Some idea is conveyed to the reader by a hasty perusal of these lines, but any attempt at an analysis to discover what Carlell really wished to say is fatal, involving one at once in obscurity.

On taking up the translation itself, it seems probable that much of the confusion in these original expressions of Carlell's existed in his own mind and not in his use of language. For, with a few exceptions, the rhyming coup-

lets into which he translated *Heraclius* are entirely intelligible. With that, however, the most favorable word is said. The verse is prosaic to the last degree, though not absurd or trivial; quite without fire but comparatively free from inversions and obscurities. It is written by rule of thumb as far as confining the sentences to single couplets is concerned. Carlell never allows himself the slightest flexibility in this regard. Every line is complete and every couplet ends a sentence, with a resulting effect of dryness and jerkiness quite remarkable. Faithful his translation is in the most literal meaning of the word, as an extract like this will show (Act III. Scene 3):

Phocas. Et toi n'espère pas désormais me fléchir.
Je tiens Héraclius, et je n'ai plus à craindre,
Plus lieu de te flatter, plus lieu de me contraindre,
Ce frère et ton espoir vont entrer au cercueil,
Et j'abattrai d'un coup sa tête et ton orgueil.
Mais ne te contrains point dans ces rudes alarmes:
Laisse aller tes soupirs, laisse couler tes larmes.
Pulchérie. Moi, pleurer! moi, gémir, tyran! J'aurais pleuré
Si quelques lachetés l'avaient déshonoré.

Here come several lines which Carlell has omitted:

Et dans ce grand revers je l'ai vu hautement
Digne d'être mon frère, et d'être mon amant.

Phocas. Nor canst thou hope, fond fool to alter me
Having thy Brother, there's no fear of thee.
No more constrain myself, for thy love plead,
One stroke abates thy Pride, takes off his head.
Do not restrain thyself, come, vent thy Gall
No words to ease thy heart, then tears must fall.
Pulcheria. I grieve, I weep, I well might so have done
Had he appeared less than our Father's Son;
I am so pleased with that he did do
That though his Sister, I'm his Lover too.

Genest's usual laconic criticism of French tragedy for once seems entirely just when he says, with impressive briefness,[1] "Carlell's translation is not a good one." The effort of the old courtier needs no more comment.

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. X. p. 138.

V. COMEDIES

THERE were several translations from Thomas Corneille made during the Restoration, but there is no special interest attaching to any of them; not only because they are so adapted and changed as scarcely to be recognizable, but because they are, in every instance, comedies, and so do not belong to the company of translated tragedy which makes this period so notable to the student of Racine and Corneille in England. The first presentation of Thomas Corneille in England of the Restoration, was a translation of his *L'Amour à la mode*, published in 1665, under title of *The Amorous Orontus or The Love in Fashion*, and reprinted in 1675 with the name of *The Amorous Gallant*. It seems to have been printed before it was acted, as there is no indication on the title-page of the first edition of its having been performed, while on the first page of the second edition there is, *A Comedie in heroick verse, as it was acted*. This is the only evidence that it ever appeared on

the stage, and Genest evidently did not think it conclusive, for he treats this work under *Plays not Acted*.[1]

The comedy is a very close translation (although printed without any acknowledgment to Corneille), which reproduces in familiar, careless verse not only the text of the original but considerable of the atmosphere. The original comedy is no masterpiece, but has the brisk and crisp movement common to French comedy of the time. Although it possesses no purely literary merit, the English version, in spite of awkwardness and occasional obscurities, has a certain liveliness and bustle which must have made it pass on the stage with some degree of success. The play was published anonymously, but is quite universally attributed to John Bulteel, son of a French Protestant living in Dover.

The other one of the two comedies of Thomas Corneille which were translated during the Restoration is *Le Feint Astrologue*. This was adapted twice for the English stage, once by an unknown translator, and once by no less a personage than John Dryden. The first version is

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. X. p. 140.

contained in a quarto volume in the British Museum, called, in the catalogue, *The Feigned Astrologer*. That copy is an imperfect one, the title-page having been torn away; but Kirkman's list,[1] which was published in 1671, gives the date of this comedy as 1668. Genest gives the date of the performance as 1668, and the first edition 1671. In the British Museum copy there is a manuscript note, apparently very old, which ascribes this work to John Dryden; but this is erroneous, as Dryden's adaptation is quite a different affair.

With the loss of the title-page has gone the list of *Dramatis Personæ*, and it is a little difficult to reëstablish this as the names are completely changed or Anglicized, and there are several additions. *Don Fernand* is called *Endimion* in the English piece, *Lucrèce*, *Clarinda; Don Juan*, *Bellamy; Jacinte*, *Fannie*, and so on. This is the first real adaptation as distinguished from a translation which is found among the works forming the subject of this study. The scenes are shifted about and suppressed in a way quite new among the translators of Corneille up to that time.

[1] Published after Dancer's *Nicomede*, cf. Bibliography.

One of the most amusing scenes is, however, lifted almost bodily; and in spite of the absurd mixture of prose and rhyme and blank verse, has preserved some of the vivacity of the original. It is the scene after the two girls have secured from the *Astrologer* the promise to send them the astral body of *Bellamy*, who is supposed to be far away. Unknown to them he is at hand, and, by a misunderstanding, walks in on them in flesh and blood. Luce, Celia's servant, goes to the door, shrieks, and exclaims,

Oh, Madam, Madam, 'tis he! 'tis Bellamy!
But that he's twice as tall as he was wont to be.
(*Drops candle out of her hand and runs away.*)

Celia. Fannie, Ay me! Ay me!

Bellamy. What means this shreeking and this running about?

Celia. Now am I well paid for my curiosity I have my wish and it proves my undoing, 'tis Bellamy's voice, but I han't the power to answer him.

Fannie (*from under the table where she had hid herself*).

I'm nothing mistaken in myself
I knew I should be afraid and my Cozen
For all her cracking proves as very a Coward.

* * * * * * *

If the Thing should find me under the table now
I'le pray hard.[1]

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[1] *Jacinte.* Ah Madame, ah Madame,
C'est lui-même, sinon qu'il est beaucoup plus grand.

The situation is so farcical that treated in almost any manner it could scarcely fail to be ludicrous. The translator has shown some intelligence in keeping reasonably close to his text in the best scenes, but this is the most favorable word that can be said of him. That he has no idea of fidelity is apparent from a selection like this, and it is equally clear that he has no literary merit of his own.

The other translation of *Le Feint Astrologue*, done by John Dryden under the title of *An Evening's Love or the Mock Astrologer* (published in 1671), is headed with an ostentatiously frank preface in which the author sets forth his sources clearly, in answer to the charge of stealing the material for his comedies. "This play was first Spanish and called *El Astrologo Fingido*, then made French by the younger Corneille, and is now translated into English, and in print under the name of *The Feigned As-*

Léonor. Ah Ciel, ah. . . .
Don Juan. Cet accueil, Léonor, me surprend.
Léonor. Ma curiosité ne sert qu' à me confondre;
C'est sa voix, je l'entends, mais je ne puis répondre.
Jacinte (*cachée*). Que je crains que ce spectre, ou plutôt ce diable,
Ne me vienne chercher jusque sous cette table.

trologer."[1] As the date of the appearance of his own adaptation is 1671, it seems probable that *The Feigned Astrologer* was earlier, and this is evidence in favor of the date given by Kirkman as against the authority of Genest. In the large manuscript collection of material for a history of the stage in the Newspaper room of the British Museum, the editor, in his notes[2] on the *Roscius Anglicanus*, is at a loss to account for the mention of *The Mock Astrologer* apparently before it was written. Downes (*Roscius Anglicanus*) gives it as one of the "Principal Old Stock Plays," and puts it twice in the list of "most taking plays." Smith, the editor of the collection mentioned above, puts a note to this effect: "These pieces are Dryden's *Secret Lover* and *An Evening's Love or the Mock Astrologer*. I know not how Downes came to rank them with the old Stock Plays." It seems not impossible that there was a confusion here, and that Downes is referring to the anonymous *Feigned Astrologer*.

Dryden's comedy itself is scarcely worth the trouble to establish the date of its first appear-

[1] Scott and Saintsbury edition of Dryden, Vol. III. p. 250.
[2] Vol. II.

ance, although Downes's testimony (if he does refer to Dryden's work) would seem to show that it was one of the successful plays of the time. Saintsbury quotes a number of adverse criticisms from contemporaries, among others a statement of Pepys that Herringman, the publisher, told him that Dryden himself thought it but a fifth-rate play. Scott, on the other hand, in his editor's note before this comedy, has a good word to say for it: "The play is more lively than most of Dryden's comedies. Wildblood and Jacintha are far more pleasant than their prototypes Celadon and Florimel; and the Spanish bustle of the plot is well calculated to keep up the attention."[1]

The mixture of bastard blank verse and prose used by Dryden makes this comedy on casual examination look very much like the crude *Feigned Astrologer*. It is better than it seems, however, and is greatly in advance of the anonymous translation. Little credit for this can be given to Corneille, for Dryden has not used much of his play, and what he has taken he has so coarsened and changed that it is hard to recognize the original. Scott points

[1] Scott and Saintsbury edition of Dryden, Vol. III. p. 237.

out that Dryden has imitated Molière's *Le Dépit Amoureux* in several scenes, and that there is much that is his own invention. The work is chiefly interesting as showing how freely translations were made (two from this indifferent comedy), and as linking Dryden's great name with the translators of Racine and Corneille.

Corneille's most successful comedy, and the one usually considered to be the best on the French stage before Molière, fared rather badly in England. *Le Menteur* received more than its share of attention as it was translated three times, but it had not the good fortune to fall into the hands of a translator who could make its merits appear in English.

The first translation, published under the name of *The Mistaken Beauty*, was a most lamentable affair, printed in a strange mixture of bastard blank verse and prose, apparently a hastily written production intended for practical use by actors only. At best, there is no literary merit in it. The date of the first edition is difficult to ascertain. The copy in the British Museum is dated 1685, but Genest observes,[1] "We are certain it was acted before

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. I. p. 34.

1667, as Dryden in his Essay greatly commends Hart for his performance of *Dorante.*" (The reference is of course to the *Essay of Dramatic Poetry.*) Mulert hazards an interesting conjecture which seems not improbable, that as Hart was acting manager in the King's company at this time, and as the epilogue and prologue speak entirely from the actor's standpoint, it is possible that *Le Menteur* was translated for the actors alone and perhaps played some years before it was printed. Dryden makes several references to it, including one quoted by Mulert which is very favorable, stating that *The Lyar* appeared in English "to so much advantage as I am confident it never received in its own country." A strange statement to make of so very crude a production, whose average of style is shown by the following extract (Act I. Scene 2):

. . . it is the intention sets
Value on the Act and a kind of undervaluing things
To do them or without it, the favour then is but small,
To give me y'r hand, 'less you give me your Heart withall;
And judge how little nourishment that fire receives,
That amorous fire inkindled in my brest,
By giving me your hand and denying me the rest.

Clarissa. That fire you speak of sir 's so new to me as

now I only see the fire sparks of it; and though your heart perhaps may burn, yet know, Sir, mine requires a longer time; but now I see your flame, mine perhaps may burn hereafter by simpathy; mean time you can't in justice blame me not to know what I was wholly ignorant of till now.

Dryden's favorable judgment and the fact that *The Mistaken Beauty* was successful enough to attain a second edition, suggest the idea that perhaps the play, as we have it now, is a victim of the careless printing of those times carried even farther than it usually was. This may have been a pirated edition, or what corresponded to that in the seventeenth-century literary world. In its present form there is no trace of the polished metres of the original and very little of the sparkling humor which made *Le Menteur* so favorite a comedy in France.

VI. THE LAST OF THE RESTORATION

Corneille's *Horace* makes in one respect the best showing in England of any of the French tragedies under consideration. There are four translations made of it, three by excellent authors. The first was by Lower, Mrs. Philips was the author of one, and William Whitehead, a poet laureate of the eighteenth century, wrote the last. Charles Cotton, the well-known translator of Montaigne's Essays, and a contemporary of Mrs. Philips, was one of this company of poets. In 1665, two years before Mrs. Philips wrote her version, he had translated *Horace* for his sister, so he tells us in the dedication dated " Beresford, November 7th, 1665." He did not intend to publish it at first, and was only persuaded to do so in 1671, although then Mrs. Philips's had appeared and met with a warm welcome. He apparently thought there would be no competition between the two, as he meant his work to be merely a book-play. It is, in fact, one of the few translations

made at this time which was never presented. Genest treats it naturally under *Plays Printed but not Acted;* and, perhaps because it made no pretence of being fit for the stage, he omits his usual fling at the dulness of French tragedy. He says briefly, "It seems to be a good translation," which indeed it surely is. In some respects it is superior to Mrs. Philips's work. It is no less exact and conscientious in all essentials — Cotton was a famous French scholar in his day — and at times it is decidedly more vigorous and moves with a freer, bolder step (Act IV. Scene 5):

Camilla. Rome! that alone does my affliction prove.
Rome! to whom thou hast sacrificed my Love.
Rome! that first gave thee life! that perfectly
I hate because she does so honour thee!
May all her neighbours in one cause conspire
To sack her Walls and ruine her by Fire
And if all Italy appear too few
May East and West joyn in the mischief too!
Far as the frozen poles may Nations come
O're Hills and Seas to sack imperious Rome![1]

[1] *Camille.* Rome, l'unique objet de mon ressentiment!
Rome, à qui vient ton bras d'immoler mon amant!
Rome, qui t'a vu naître, et que ton cœur adore!
Rome enfin que je hais parcequ'elle t'honore:
Puissent tous ses voisins ensemble conjurés

Cotton's rendering of this is not only good and stirring verse in its own right, but it is an accurate reproduction of the movement of his original as well as its words, and one cannot read passages like this without regretting that this translation was never declaimed by competent actors.

Cotton produces his effects by broad, sweeping lines, with a careless confidence in his own instinctive and scholarly accuracy, which is quite different from Mrs. Philips's anxious fidelity. He does not do this, however, without paying the penalty of being diffuse at times and of using two or three lines to translate one of Corneille's. (Act I. Scene 1.) "Et qu' à nos yeux Camille agit bien autrement," is translated by Mrs. Philips, "How distant is Camilla's way from this;" while Cotton runs off into undeniable padding,

> And in this great affair Camilla's breast
> After another manner is possest.

Saper ses fondements encor mal assurés!
Et, si ce n'est assez de toute l'Italie,
Que l'Orient contre elle à l'Occident s'allie;
Que cent peuples, unis des bouts de l'univers,
Passent pour la détruire et les monts et les mers!

There are many such instances where, in comparison with Orinda's never failing care, his lack of minute accuracy forms an offset to his superiority in other respects. But these passages are not often important ones. These Cotton almost invariably renders with an apparent freedom which is the highest form of fidelity.

He has followed Mrs. Philips in putting songs between the acts. These are of his own composition and show no great power of poetic conception. They are lyrics in which he has endeavored to use complicated verse-forms, and apparently his mind was not nimble enough to enable him to succeed in this form of composition. They are rather heavy and unmusical although correct enough. On the whole, this translation of *Horace* seems to the writer not only the best English version of this tragedy, but one of the best ever made of a play by Corneille or Racine. It is greatly to be regretted that it was never acted, for if it had been performed successfully it would have assumed a most important place in the company of translated tragedy.

In 1671 Dublin is brought into prominence again as the city where another of these great

plays was performed in English. In that year Kirkman — the London play publisher — put out *Nicomede, a Tragi-Comedy, Translated out of the French of Monsieur Corneille by John Dancer. As it was acted at the Theatre Royal in Dublin.* The printing license is dated December 16, 1670, so that it must have been acted during that year. It is dedicated by the publisher "in the Author's absence" to Thomas, Earl of Ossory (son of the Duke of Ormond), and the first sentence begins, "This piece being made English in Your Honour's Service and by your Command, having already passed the Suffrage of the Stage and now made more publique by passing the Press. . . ." Again the little circle of *grands seigneurs* at Dublin and their interest in French literature is shown as a factor to be reckoned with in the treatment of the serious and conscientious translations made at this time.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* has very few facts about the John Dancer who translated *Nicomede.* From various indications it conjectures that he was in the service of the Duke of Ormond, while the latter was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and it seems certain that

personally he was very devoted to him. The choice of *Nicomède* (it is evident from the dedication that the Duke chose the play to be done into English) shows the usual excellence of taste of Dancer's aristocratic patron in such matters. Moreover, he gave this last of Corneille's great plays to a translator who, although not gifted with an extraordinary amount of poetic talent, was nevertheless a moderate versifier and a literary man of taste and intelligence. His production holds its place bravely among the excellent Restoration translations and has many qualities in common with them. In the first place it is conscientious; there is no tampering with the text, no introduction of songs and dances between the acts, — an extremely honest reproduction. The lack of inspiration usually supposed to accompany extreme honesty is to be noticed, but an ever present good taste is an agreeable, if not a sufficient, substitute. The work throughout is kept to an even level of smoothness, there are few lapses into lame and halting lines, while there are occasional stretches of writing which are excellent in a quiet, unpretentious way.

Genest speaks of this translation in his re-

marks on the stage in Ireland:[1] ". . . the translator should have called his play *Nicomedes*, not *Nichomede* — in English we follow the Latins and not the 'chopping French' as Shakespeare calls them. . . . It is not a bad play, but it has the usual coldness and declamation of the French stage." The book is so poorly printed and the spelling is so irregular that it is doubtful if the author is responsible for the spelling which Genest criticises. Indeed, on the title-page the name is given as *Nicomede*. An extract which gives a very fair idea of the intelligent and uninspired way in which Dancer renders his original is the following from Act IV. Scene 4:

Prusias. . . . to-morrow from this hand
Atalus shall receive supream command;
I'le make him King of Pontus and my heir;
And for the Rebel who does so much dare
Rome shall be judge what his affronts deserve.
In Atalus' stead he shall for Hostage serve
And to conduct him fit means shall be found,
So soon as he has seen his Brother crowned.
Nichomede. And will you send me then to Rome?
Prusias. Yes, Sir.
Go ask your dear Laodice from her.
Nichomede. I'le go, I'le go, Sir, and shall there appear
A greater Monarch than you dare be here.

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. X. p. 271.

Flaminius. Rome on your actions will true value set.
Nichomede. Gently, Flaminius, we are not there yet,
The journey's long and you may be deceived;
Things well begun are often ill atchieved.[1]

This is extremely close translation and yet has the merit of reading as though it were spontaneous. The secret of the Restoration translators in writing faithful and yet flowing translations belongs to Dancer as well as to the more gifted members of the group.

The play seems to have attained a considerable degree of success, but there is little mention of it in the theatrical historians of the

[1] *Prusias.* . . . et dès demain Attale
Recevra de ma main la puissance royale.
Je le fais roi de Pont et mon seul héritier;
Et quant à ce rebelle, à ce courage fier
Rome entre vous et lui jugera de l'outrage;
Je veux qu'au lieu d'Attale il lui serve d'otage;
Et pour l'y mieux conduire il vous sera donné,
Sitôt qu'il aura vu son frère couronné.
Nicomède. Vous m'envoirez à Rome!
Prusias. On t'y fera justice.
Va, va lui demander ta chère Laodice.
Nicomède. J'irai, j'irai, Seigneur, vous le voulez ainsi;
Et j'y serai plus roi que vous n'êtes ici.
Flaminius. Rome sait vos hauts faits et déjà vous adore.
Nicomède. Tout beau, Flaminius! je n'y suis pas encore:
La route en est mal sûre, à tout considérer,
Et qui m'y conduira pourrait bien s'égarer.

time, either favorable or otherwise. Apparently a second edition was never called for.

The first translation from Racine is connected with a well-known author of the seventeenth century, but it is a sorry performance viewed from any standpoint. It was printed in 1675, under the auspices of John Crowne, a familiar figure of that day, known as "starched Johnnie." The translation was a very poor piece of work and was received coldly. Chagrined by this, Crowne made haste in the *Epistle to the Reader* to disclaim the authorship, and gives the following explanation of his connection with the affair. After the title-page [which reads, *Andromache, a Tragedy as it is acted at the Duke's Theatre London, 1675*] he addresses himself to the reader thus: "This play was translated by a Young Gentleman who has a great esteem of all French Playes, and particularly of this; and, thinking it a pity the Town should lose so excellent a Divertisement for want of a Translation, bestowed his pains upon it; and, it happening to be in the long Vacation, a time when the Playhouses are willing to catch at any Reed to save themselves from Sinking, to do the House a Kindness and to serve the Gentleman,

who, it seem'd was desirous to see it on the Stage, I willingly perused it but found neither the Play to answer to Gentleman's Commendation nor his Genius in Verse very fortunate, and yet neither of 'em so contemptible as to be wholly slighted ; but neither the Gentleman nor myself having leisure enough to make those Emendations which both the Play and the Verse needed, I begged leave of him to turn it into Prose, which I obtained, and so it is in the condition you see.

"It is much esteemed in France and here, too, by some English, who are admirers of the French Wit, and think this suffered much in the Translation ; I cannot tell in what, except in not bestowing Verse upon it, which I thought it did not deserve, for otherwise there is all that is in the French Play, and something more, as may be seen in the last Act, where what is only dully recited in the French Play is there represented. Had it been acted in the good well-meaning times when the *Cid*, *Heraclius*, and other French Playes met such applause, this would have passed very well ; but since our Audiences have tasted so plentifully the firm English wit, these thin Regalio's will not down.

"This I thought good to say in my own behalf, to clear myself of the scandal of this poor translation wherewith I was slandered in spite of all I could say in private, in spite of what the Prologue and Epilogue affirmed on the Stage in Public, that if the Play met with any Success he might wholly take to himself a Reputation of which I was not in the least ambitious."

This preface is the most interesting part of the production, as it is full of side-lights on the way in which people of Crowne's standing regarded the great French dramatists, and is, moreover, an amusingly precise delineation of some of Crowne's personal characteristics.

As a matter of fact, the translation is an astonishingly bad one. Racine's melodious and flowing lines are rendered in the baldest and barest of prose translations, quite without grace of any sort. There are sudden lapses into pseudo-verse (as though Crowne had not even taken the trouble to break up the original rhythm), and as sudden returns to prose with perfect inconsequentiality.

In Act IV. Scene 3, about the middle of the scene, there is an abrupt fall into verse :

Hermione. On, now or never — who delays desires.
Run to the Temple now and Sacrifice
Orestes. Whom?
Hermione. Pyrrhus.
Orestes. Pyrrhus, Madame.
Hermione. What! does your Hate languish? run
And do not fear. I shall recall you, regard not you the right which I forget —
I have resolved revenge and he shall dye.
'Tis not for you his deeds to justify.[1]

The last act, as Crowne says, shows in action on the stage what is related in the original. This is the entering wedge for such modification, which from this time on becomes more and more pronounced.

There has been an attempt to make a spectacular scene with a solemn procession of Greeks, priests, and attendants. Choruses and songs occupy much of the time. Pyrrhus is

[1] *Hermione.* Tous vos retardements sont pour moi des refus.
Courez au temple. Il faut immoler. . . .
Oreste. Qui?
Hermione. Pyrrhus.
Oreste. Pyrrhus, Madame.
Hermione. Hé quoi? votre haine chancelle?
Ah! courez et craignez que je ne vous rappelle.
N'alléguez point des droits que je veux oublier;
Et ce n'est pas à vous à le justifier.

killed in sight of the audience, and his body is dragged out of the temple by the Greeks.

The superlative degree of badness which is attained at the beginning of this translation is kept up throughout, and after reading it one is not surprised at Crowne's hangdog explanation at the beginning. It is an interesting coincidence that *Andromaque*, which was to be so completely successful in another version, should have failed so disastrously in this.

The greatest name in the list of translators of classic French tragedy is that of Thomas Otway, and there is a singular felicity in the choice which he made. None of Corneille's plays could have been so suitable for his talents as one of Racine's, and none of Racine's so entirely after his own heart as *Bérénice*, which he made the foundation of a tragedy published in 1677 with the title of *Titus and Berenice*. The moving and pathetic situation is one which he might have invented, and he made brilliant use of it in his adapted tragedy. His success is the more notable because he was only twenty-six years old at the time he produced this work. Considered as a translation the English tragedy is a paradox, for it is freer than Mrs. Philips's

work, and even takes more liberties than the *Persons of Honour;* but, as a whole, it is a faithful rendition of the French, and in many passages reproduces to an astonishing degree the exact atmosphere of the original, even while departing in many ways from it.

From some points of view, this is the most interesting of all the translations made from the tragedies of Racine and Corneille. The comparison between Otway's tragedy and Racine's is extremely enlightening as to the difference between the taste of the two nations at that time. For although Otway's version was no "mere paraphrase" (as Mrs. Philips would have said), every line which he took from the French he made completely English; and not only English but Restoration English. It is evident at every step that he was a writer of tragedy, as well as a translator, and he did, unconsciously and successfully, what eighteenth-century translators consciously and unsuccessfully tried to accomplish, *i.e.* to make an English tragedy out of a French one, not simply to present an English version.

Every speech of Otway's is based to a greater or less degree on the French, and many of them

are translated line for line; nevertheless, there is not a passage which is not English. The severe simplicity of Racine's diction is often replaced by what would be bombast if any one but Otway had written it; on the other hand, there are passages where an unaffected and poignant pathos appears, entirely English and different from the *tristesse majestueuse*, which Racine calls the characteristic quality of classic tragedy. In short, it is an English tragedy of the time of Charles II. which is under discussion, with all the faults and merits of its time.

Dibdin (Vol. IV. p. 103) has a curious comment on this tragedy. Referring to the romantic story of the unhappy love of Henrietta of England for Louis XIV. and to her request for a tragedy written about the story of Titus and Berenice, which she considered similar to her own, Dibdin says, "Plays written on particular occasions seldom succeed beyond the moment. Otway, therefore, was unfortunate in his choice, and although he wisely turned to Corneille more than to Racine, his success did not warrant the trouble he took to obtain it."

It is singular that any one should think it a merit to copy Corneille rather than Racine in

this instance; and it is quite inexplicable that Dibdin should have made the statement that Otway did so, for there seems to the writer no single instance where this is true. The *Dramatis Personæ* are exactly the same in the English as in Racine's tragedy, and none of the incidents of Corneille's invention are reproduced. The only possibility of an imitation appears to be in the last act, where a small change (discussed in following pages) is introduced, which, although entirely different in form, produces a little of the same effect as the relenting of the Roman Senate in Corneille's play. But this seems to be the only instance where Otway had Corneille's play in mind, and this is doubtful. (Act II. Scene 4.)

Berenice. I who shall die if but debarr'd your sight—
Titus. Madam, what is it that your griefs declare?
What time do you choose? for pity's sake forbear.
Your bounties my ingratitude proclaim.
Berenice. You can do nothing that deserves that name:
No sir, you never can ungrateful prove.
Maybe I'm fond and tire you with my love.
Titus. No, madam, no: my heart, since I must speak,
Was ne'er more full of love or half so like to break
But . . .
Berenice. What?
Titus. Alas!

Berenice. Proceed.
Titus. The Empire . . .
Rome.
Berenice. Well?
Titus. Oh, the dismal secret will not come—
Away, Paulinus, ere I'm quite undone,
My speech forsakes me and my heart's all stone.[1]

This comes very near being the ideal of translation, and makes Mrs. Philips's careful accuracy seem a little dry. If Otway had written the whole tragedy with the fidelity which he shows here and with the art which is always his, it

[1] *Bérénice.* Moi, qui mourrais le jour qu'on voudrait m'interdire
De vous . . .
Titus. Madame, hélas! que me venez-vous dire?
Quel temps choisissez-vous? Ah! de grace arrêtez:
C'est trop pour un ingrat prodiguer vos bontés.
Bérénice. Pour un ingrat, Seigneur! Et le pouvez-vous être?
Ainsi donc mes bontés vous fatiguent peut-être?
Titus. Non, Madame. Jamais, puisqu'il faut vous parler,
Mon cœur de plus de feux ne se sentit brûler.
Mais . . .
Bérénice. Achevez.
Titus. Hélas!
Bérénice. Parlez.
Titus. Rome . . . l'Empire . . .
Bérénice. Hé bien?
Titus. Sortons, Paulin: je ne lui puis rien dire.

would have been easily the best translation made. The rendering of "Mon cœur de plus de feux ne se sentit bruler" by "My heart . . . Was ne'er more full of love nor half so like to break" is a distinct improvement, and instances are not rare where the simplicity and feeling of Otway are heard in phrases not in the original. There are, however, not only a number of places where he departs from his original in linguistic details, but many where he introduces important differences, not in the plot but in the conception of the characters. Antiochus he makes at once more prominent and more completely admirable. He intensifies the sad nobility of the man and makes him a very touching and dignified figure. As for his treatment of Berenice, Otway has done the impossible. Racine had already written of her in his most artful and ardent vein, and it would seem out of the question for another poet to convey a still more tender feeling for her misfortunes. But the English poet's peculiar gift for expressing at once sorrow and passion enables him to give a new and thrilling pathos to his heroine. The final scene of leave-taking between the two lovers is, if one dare to say it, more moving even than the original.

After threatening suicide, as in the French, Titus by a final effort renounces the empire and gives himself entirely to Berenice. Assured by this that he is sincere in attributing their separation wholly to the Roman law and that his passion is as ardent as at first, she outdoes him, and announces her intention to leave Rome forever. From this point on the French is more closely followed. This change Otway has written thus:

Titus. Best of thy sex! and dearest! now I see
How poor is empire when compared to thee.
Hence, ye perplexing cares that clog the brain,
Whilst struck with ecstasy I here fall down.
Thus at your feet, a happy prostrate laid,
I'm much more blest than if the world I swayed.
Berenice. Now the blest Berenice enough has seen,
I thought your love had quite extinguished been,
But 'twas my error; for you still are true;
E'en my worst sufferings much o'erpaid I see,
Nor shall the unhappy world be cursed for me.
Nothing, since first 'twas yours, my love would shake,
So absolute a conquest did you make;
But now I'll bring it to the utmost test,
And with one funeral act crown all the rest.
Titus. Ha! tell me, Berenice, what will you do?
Berenice. Far from your sight and Rome forever go,
I have resolved on't, and it shall be so.
Titus. Antiochus! I'm born to be undone;

When I the greatest conquest thought t'have won,
E'en in my noblest race I am outrun.

This difference in the ending is one that merits some thought, for although it is seemingly an unimportant change, the feeling which caused it is concerned with a deeply rooted difference in the mental constitution of the two nations, and one which has a great influence later on the translations made from French tragedy. It is the English revolt against the logic of the situation which led to the many alterations of sad to happy endings in the tragedies of the eighteenth century. This is the first indication, and although it is slight, it is significant of that sentimental incapacity to hold to the conditions as first presented if they lead to unhappy situations. Here the lack of logic is in showing Titus as succumbing to the pressure of circumstance. At once the impression of the sincerity of the tragic struggle between his love and duty is weakened. If he could bring himself to renounce the empire in the last act, he might have done it in the first and saved all the agony of the play, which now goes for nothing but to impress on Berenice the advisability of her

withdrawal. If it was impossible for him to give up his high position at any time, it was always impossible under the same conditions, and his doing so is a concession to a sentimental idea. In Otway's work this desire for a more comfortable solution of the problem than is logically possible does not affect the main action of the play, as he separates his lovers in the end quite as tragically as Racine ; but as the tendency grew on English translators it brought about such absurdities as the resuscitation of Hippolyte in *Phèdre* and of Chimène's father in the *Cid*. Apparently the feeling was, then as now, "anything for a happy ending."

It cannot be denied that probably the scene as performed was more moving than Racine's sombre contest of the lovers, and that Berenice's resolve to leave Rome had in it an element of dramatic surprise not to be found in the French. That was exactly what Otway, consciously or not, was striving for; and it is exactly this change in effect which later translators endeavored to secure by more obvious and less artistic shifting of values, and which they so lamentably failed to achieve. It is interesting to find this concession to the

shrinking from the ultimate and logical conclusion of given conditions, so deftly arranged as scarcely to be noticeable even in this period of exact fidelity to the text. It seems almost impossible that it is the same concession made later with such sweeping disregard of sense and probability.

The play was produced at Dorset Garden with the *Cheats of Scapin*, also translated by Otway. The combination was apparently a fortunate one, as it was given to the public with reasonable success a number of times. Downes, in the *Roscius Anglicanus*, says, "This Play with the Farce, being perfectly well acted, had good success."

In spite of its very considerable variations from the original, *Titus and Berenice* may, perhaps, claim to be the most satisfactory attempt at transplanting French tragedy to the English stage. It almost attains the ideal of translation, which is not a mere reproduction of the words and scenes of the original. No matter how well this is done, it never produces an English work of art. This play of Otway's seems to be, if the paradoxical wording be pardoned, what French tragedy would have been if it had been English.

VII. AN INTERREGNUM

With the death of Charles II. begins a period of inaction among the translators. In the most prosperous days the business of translation is a growth with weak roots compared to the sturdy nature of original production, and it is one of the first forms of literary activity to disappear in times of national disorder. The rebellions of Argyle and Monmouth, the terrible times of the Bloody Assizes and the religious troubles of James, were unfavorable to any attempt to introduce a foreign literature. The people who during the Restoration had busied themselves with translations had neither time nor disposition to go on with the work.

The accession of William and Mary, and the confusion of plots and wars and new reforms which filled their reign, made no better conditions for either the writing or acceptance of translations, and it is not until toward the

end of Queen Anne's time that we come again upon a proof of interest in Racine and Corneille.

The character of the translators of the Restoration has been shown to be aristocratic. They were people connected in one way and another with the Court. Later translators have this character no longer, and the only two translations made during the uneasy times sketched above, show that the change was already taking place.[1] One of the translators is a London merchant and the other is a French refugee, journalist, grammarian and politician. Already there is a great change from the magnificent productions at Court of the *Persons of Honour* and of Mrs. Philips.

The fact that the two translations were

[1] In *Notes and Queries* (2d series, Vol. IX. p. 281) there is an inquiry about a translation of the *Cid* said to have been made in 1704 by "T. H. Gent." A correspondent writes to know if any one can tell him any more than this bare title. No answer appears during the rest of that year (1860), but in the next year (*N. and Q.* 2d series, Vol. XI. p. 150) an exactly similar inquiry is again inserted. In no other place in *Notes and Queries* does any other reference to this translation appear, and these two questions are the only mention of it which the writer has been able to find.

actually made during the period described as being so unfavorable, does not invalidate such a characterization. Neither was made by a person of high social standing: one was done by a Frenchman, who is naturally excluded from generalizations about the state of English minds, and the other was never published, and in its clear, round handwriting still lies buried in the archives of the British Museum.

This translation is of the *Cid*, and is the last work contained in a well-preserved folio volume of the poetical efforts of William Popple, dated 1691. The author is an uncle of the dramatist of the eighteenth century, and the nephew of Andrew Marvell. The large volume in which are contained, all carefully indexed and dated, his poetical works, shows him to have been a poet as well as a man of affairs. It is a heterogeneous collection: translations from *Horace*, verses for special occasions, poems of advice, epitaphs, and almost everything else that can be put into verse — the literary accumulations of the leisure moments of a business man.

The translation of the *Cid* is the most serious production the volume holds, and its

perusal awakens a lively regret that William Popple did not find the times suitable for its publication. Without any doubt it would have been a success if it had appeared during the earlier years of the reign of Charles II. It reproduces the spirit of the original with great accuracy, and is written with a considerable degree of smoothness and elegance, and with much more control over technical difficulties than his predecessor, Rutter, can show at any place in his work. It is true that Popple, like Rutter, found the translation of Rodrigue's lyric monologue beyond his powers to reproduce exactly, but even here he is very much better than his predecessor.

Popple has not tried to make a faithful line-for-line translation. He has had, apparently, rather the ideal of the *Persons of Honour* before him than Mrs. Philips's more severe rule. But the fidelity to the spirit is remarkable, when this is taken into account. A very good example of this looseness of form and closeness of meaning is the following (Act II. Scene 8):

> I saw him dead, by Death bereft of speech;
> But on the Ground in Characters of Blood

I read my duty, and his open wound
Call'd loud for vengeance on his Murderer.[1]

It is undeniable that Popple has here taken the sense of Corneille and put it into verse as he thought best and could best manage; but the smoothness and fire of such a passage contrast favorably with much of the work of translations called more faithful. Popple could be more literal, as is shown in several passages, and he seems to have used very judiciously the license that his system of translation leaves to the writer — not taking advantage of it to make free renderings except where it seemed necessary for smoothness. In Act I. Scene 4, he has Englished the first passage of Don Diègue's monologue with the use of only one more line than Corneille:

Oh Fury, Oh Despaire! Oh curst Old Age!
Is't to receive this Infamy at last
That I have lived thus long? Have I gone through

---

[1] Je vous l'ai déjà dit, je l'ai trouvé sans vie;
Son flanc était ouvert; et pour mieux m'émouvoir
Son sang sur la poussière écrivait mon devoir;
Ou plutôt sa valeur en cet état réduite
Me parlait par sa plaie, et hâtait ma poursuite.

So many Martial toils, to see my Lawr'ls
At last all withered in one day?[1]

This is not inspired translation; but Popple's smooth blank verse, the evident accuracy of his understanding of the French, his good taste and true ear, make this a most interesting and valuable contribution to the translation literature of that period.

This was written in 1691, and Popple did not die till 1708, but apparently at no time during those seventeen years did he deem it advisable to publish or circulate this work in any form. At least, a diligent search shows no reference to it among his contemporaries.

The second translation of this intermediary time is a play called *Achilles*, a translation of *Iphigénie*. Its author is the French Huguenot refugee already referred to, Abel Boyer by name, a man of considerable prominence in English life. He left France when still a very young man, and plunged with great zeal into English politics, becoming a staunch advocate

[1] O rage ! ô désespoir ! ô vieillesse ennemie !
N'ai-je donc tant vécu que pour cette infamie ?
Et ne suis-je blanchi dans les travaux guerriers
Que pour voir en un jour flétrir tant de lauriers ?

of Whig principles. This stood in the way of his advancement on one occasion, and in his resentment at this check to his ambition he left the life of a professor, which he had adopted, and gave himself up to literature and politics. His very first work was his *Achilles*. Boyer is the author of a grammar and dictionary which were excellent productions. His dictionary first appeared at the Hague in 1702, and its popularity may be judged from the fact that in 1860 an edition — said to be the forty-first — was published in Paris. It was, of course, infinitely superior to any French-English dictionary that had appeared before it. The number of political pamphlets, essays, monthly journals, annals, etc., which are due to Boyer's pen is immense. And it was he who had the principal management of the celebrated newspaper, the *Post-Boy*.

His life is a very picturesque one, and not the least picturesque part of it is the number of quarrels in which he was interminably engaged. It does not matter now whether he was an eighteenth-century Whistler or a much-abused man, the fact remains that he almost never undertook anything without a quarrel, and the

history of his *Achilles* is no exception to the rule.

There were two editions of this work, and in both cases Boyer had trouble connected with its appearance. The first time it came out directly on the heels of a tragedy performed at Lincoln's Inn Fields with little or no success, which was unfortunately so named as to give the idea to the public that it was on the same subject as Boyer's piece. John Dennis, the bitter, was the author of the first Iphigenia tragedy, and he founded his play on the story of Iphigenia in Tauris, while of course Boyer's work was of Iphigenia in Aulis. Dennis's play was a failure. Downes says of it that it did not "answer the expense of the dresses." So that not only had the public some reason to fear a play on the same subject from Boyer, but they had the lively recollection of having been bored at the performance of the first one. At least such is Boyer's attitude, as may be gathered from a passage in his preface.

In his first paragraph he speaks about the kindly reception of the play in England, and then continues, "Some of my friends have wondered that a Play which was acted with

so much applause should stop so soon in its career. The reason of it is obvious. This tragedy came out upon the Neck of another of the same name, which, being the product of a Giant-Wit and a Giant-Critick, like Horace's Mountain in Labour had miserably baulked the World's Expectations: and most People having been tir'd at Lincolns-Inn-Fields did not care to venture their Patience at Drury-Lane, upon a false supposition that the two Iphigenias were much alike: Whereas they differ no less than a young airy Virgin from a stale antiquated Maid." Boyer's irritation on the subject is probably not without just cause, for the acrid Mr. Dennis must have been an especially disagreeable rival. Moreover, at this time Boyer was not in the same secure financial position in which his later journalistic and political activities placed him, and the lack of success of his play must have been a disappointment to more than his pride. Genest says it was acted four times at this its first appearance. This, while no proof of brilliant success, was also not the complete failure that we would judge it from a modern standpoint. It was fair luck, and by no means entirely discouraging to an

unknown author. In addition to the rivalry with Dennis, Boyer, in the second edition of his play (which will be taken up in its order), claims that the first appearance of his tragedy was robbed of much of the brilliancy which might have been its fate by the incompetence of one of the actresses. "It received no small Prejudice from the Person that acted Eriphile, who sunk under the weight of so great a part." He adds, as final excuse for his lack of brilliant success, that "The Duchess of Marlborough, who at that time bore an irresistible Sway, bespoke the Comedy then in Vogue during the run of *Iphigenia in Aulis*."

One is naturally inclined to regard all these excuses on Boyer's part with suspicion, and to lay his lack of success to faults in his work. But an examination of the tragedy shows no inherent reason why it should not have succeeded. As Baker says, it is surprisingly free from Gallicisms,[1] and it is evident that it was

[1] The *Biographica Dramatica* praises very highly Boyer's complete mastery of English, and says that he and Motteux (another Huguenot refugee) were the only foreigners ever known to acquire an absolutely perfect knowledge of English. It does indeed seem remarkable that Boyer, in only ten years' time, could have acquired such command of a

written by a man who understood all the shades of meaning of his original, though he does not always reproduce them in another tongue. The reader has a feeling in Boyer's case that he has at least recognized the vigorous and eloquent passages and made the attempt to give them with the same force in English. This, of course, puts him far beyond any such author as Lower. His work gives one the impression of being that of a thoroughly intelligent man, and if he had had no other good qualities at all — which is far from being the case — this would have made his attempt an acceptable one. Let the translation speak for itself in a passage like the following from Act III. Scene 6:

Achilles. 'Twere little to protect, I will revenge you
And punish all at once th' ignoble cheat
That dar'd abuse my Name for your undoing.
Iphigenia. My Lord, if ever you did truly love me
Let now my prayers and Tears disarm your Anger.
Consider that Barbarian whom you dare
That cruel bloudy treacherous Enemy
Is still my Father —

---

tongue so difficult as ours, for he landed in England in 1689, only ten years before the appearance of *Achilles*.

Achilles. Your Father, Madam? No — his black Design
Leaves him no other than a Murtherer's name![1]

It is really smooth, spirited, and a close copy of the French.

It seems curious that it should be a Frenchman who is the first to introduce successfully the pernicious custom of anglicizing French tragedy in a way up to this time not encountered (except in the *Andromache* of Crowne, which was so entirely obscure as to have no influence). From Rutter's *Cid* to Popple's, no one had ever thought of altering the text more than possibly could be helped. The ideal had always been to put the play on the English stage as it had been on the French. Boyer introduced the system of heightening the color and action to fit the less refined English tastes,

[1] *Achille.* Il faut que le cruel qui m'a pu mépriser
Apprenne de quel nom il osait abuser.
Iphigénie. Hélas ! si vous m'aimez, si pour grâce dernière
Vous daignez d'une amante écouter la prière,
C'est maintenant, Seigneur, qu'il faut me le prouver.
Car enfin, ce cruel que vous allez braver,
Cet ennemi barbare, injuste, sanguinaire,
Songez, quoi qu'il ait fait, songez qu'il est mon père.
Achille. Lui, votre père ! Après son horrible dessein,
Je ne le connais plus que pour votre assassin.

and put in practice a principle whose worst result is reached in Cibber's absurd change in the ending of the *Cid*. Boyer had studied the English carefully, with a mind sharpened by the necessity of making his living among them, and he conceived the idea of changing the last act of *Iphigénie* into an elaborate spectacle. Ulysses' account of the rescue of the heroine is too tame to suit the English, he thinks, and accordingly he has the rescue performed on the stage. There are minute stage directions for the sacrificial scene: bands of priests singing invocations to Diana, choruses, an eclipse of the sun, thunder and lightning, "Diana in a Machine crosses the stage," Eriphile kills herself in the full glare of the footlights; and in general the author endeavors to give his audience something to pay them for having waited through four long acts of nothing but dialogue. That this curious mixture of classic tragedy and melodrama did not repel the audiences of that day is seen from the fact that this blood-and-thunder ending is exactly what the next translator of *Iphigénie* takes from Boyer, and what the latter resents most bitterly is this theft of his changed ending. But that quarrel belongs in another chapter.

VIII. LE MENTEUR

The advent of Queen Anne to the throne marks a new epoch in translation-making, which is, perhaps, the most interesting in its history. This is the period when translations from Racine and Corneille may reasonably be supposed to have had more real influence and to have lived more nearly a spontaneous life than either before or since.

The Restoration translations were regarded with respect, it is true, and enjoyed great favor with cultured and fashionable readers. But they were afar off from the everyday literary life of their day. Not many attempts were made to imitate them in native English tragedies — they were neither attacked nor defended with any great fervor. A certain class of society — the most influential in England — had a genuine liking for them, and the rest of England went to see them under protest, and read them because they were the fashion. The best men of letters of the realm translated the works

of the two great French tragedians, and having done so, made no words about it — made no boast that their taste was French and superior.

With the advent of Queen Anne the scene was completely changed. Literary activity of every description became infinitely more lively and less dignified in its character. A flood of pamphlets and other ephemeral writings of controversy showed that, for the first time, the power and cheapness of the printing-press was fully realized by the literary fraternity. The first newspaper with any pretence to literary quality was printed. The restless demand for continual change and for quick reply in argumentative dialogue made itself felt.

To this general change in the world of writers, translations quickly responded. No longer solid monuments, they became stones of argument which opposing parties threw at each other's heads. They were no longer taken as a matter of course and accepted without question, as in the "good old well-meaning days," as Crowne put it. They were both advocated and scorned with much vigor. On the one hand the people who admired them spoke in aggressively emphatic terms, and on the other,

people who were bored by them retorted by a studious neglect — not docilely led by fashion as were audiences in Pepys's time. They were no longer apart in a mildly distinguished atmosphere of their own, but were dragged into one of the fiercest literary battles ever waged on English soil; which ended in a complete victory for the side opposing translations, Shakespeare and the romantic drama having triumphed so absolutely that one is obliged to dig vigorously beneath the surface of the battle ground to discover any traces of their opponents. In a period so alive with literary activity it is to be expected that the translations of Racine and Corneille will be much more numerous than ever before. Whereas during the Restoration there were published but eight plays translated from these two authors in the whole of the twenty-five years of Charles's reign, in the ten years of Anne's period there are ten published, and in the fourteen years after the appearance of the first translation in the eighteenth century there were printed fourteen translated tragedies.

It is natural that the period when most of these translations appeared is about the time when Addison in *Cato* made the most worthy

and serious attempt known to make classic tragedy at home behind English footlights. *Cato* was played for the first time in 1712, the same year that Ambrose Philips presented his adaptation of *Andromaque* (the *Distrest Mother*), which was the most successful English adaptation from a French tragedy ever made. Before three years had passed after these two successes no less than ten translations had been made from Racine and Corneille, of which six were actually performed on the stage. This time was the most agitated period of the struggle between English and French taste, and it is not surprising to see the translations most plentiful.

It would be neither necessary nor profitable to attempt to draw a picture of those exciting times. That has been done too well by others to need repeating. On the other hand, it is very difficult to pick out from the tangled heap of literary complications just the translations with which this study deals, and the facts immediately concerning them; for, radically unlike the Restoration translations, they are connected by innumerable threads to each other and to the quarrels of the day.

Take, for instance, the tangled history of *Le Menteur*. Although not a tragedy, this is a very good example of the chequered career of many adaptations. It is doubtful if any play has ever had a longer life of borrowings. Foote, he of the many literary larcenies, took it from Steele, who took it from the anonymous translation already treated; the author of that work borrowed it from Corneille, and Corneille, as he at first supposed, from Lope de Vega, who did not write it. It can be traced back no farther than Ruiz de Alarcon, who was born in America; but after such a history, it would not be surprising to find that the plot is in reality an Aztec one. This long line of reincarnations which the comedy has undergone is the more singular because, in England at least, none of the adaptations had any signal success. The *Mistaken Beauty* has already been shown as a far from popular comedy, and according to Steele's own account his *Lying Lover* fared not much better. He says frankly in his *Apology for his Life:* "This play was damned for its piety." It is true this is one of the first comedies to show the effect of the virtuous Mr. Collier's crusade against the vice of the

Restoration comedy. It is undoubtedly pious — in spots! But an impartial examination into the merits of the comedy leads one to think that its piety was not the only reason for its lack of success. The plot is too complicated for Steele to handle dexterously, and he has not been satisfied with the intrigue as he found it. Into the gay and dazzling Spanish comedy he introduces a sentimental moral incident which is oddly out of keeping with the rest of his play, which follows the French closely. He makes the hero kill a man while intoxicated, and very properly find himself in prison. Steele's own comment on this addition, given in his preface, shows better than can any mocking commentator the lachrymose sentiment displayed by the hero who up to that point had been the jaunty, unscrupulous liar of the French text: "The anguish he there expresses and the mutual sorrow between an only child and a tender father in that distress are perhaps an injury to rule of comedy, but I am sure they are a justice to those of morality; and passages of such a nature being so frequently applauded on the stage, it is high time we should no longer draw occasions of

mirth from those images which the religion of our country tells us we ought to tremble at with horror." The man who wrote those lines was not the one to reproduce the sparkle of a comedy whose success depends wholly upon the lightness of touch with which the twisted threads of the story are knotted and untied. He is evidently not aware of this lack of dexterity on his part, for he says, "The Spark of this story is introduced with as much agility and life as He brought with him from France and as much Humour as I could bestow upon him in England."

In the first three acts Steele does his best work. There are a number of scenes where the fun of the original is preserved with considerable skill, but he fails to appreciate the value of terseness and crispness in a dialogue like the comical one of misunderstanding about the river fête. (Act II. Scene 3.) Corneille had the wisdom to lift this almost bodily from the lively and vivacious scene in the Spanish, and the anonymous translator of the *Mistaken Beauty* showed more judgment than Steele by following his text very closely. Steele weighs down the brisk movement by elaborations and amplifica-

tions which make the scene heavy, tiresome, and obvious.

In addition, he followed the seventeenth-century fashion of writing the serious scenes of his comedy in blank verse. This is a great blemish, as his blank verse is execrable. The sentimental scene between Géronte and Dorante (who figure in his adaptation as young and old Mr. Bookwit) is written part in prose and part in an odd sort of halting verse, the quality of which may be imagined from this sample:

Ages and generations pass away,
And with resistless force like Waves o'er Waves
Roul down the irrevocable Stream of Time
Into the insatiate Ocean for ever. Thus we are gone;
But the erroneous sense of man — 'tis the lamented
that's at
Rest but the survivor mourns.

The tone of this part of the comedy is really chronologically ahead of Steele's time. It is quite in the style of sentimentality which was to become the vogue in the middle of the century. It is curious to find so perfect a specimen of the *comédie larmoyante* set into the body of a work so entirely opposed to it in spirit. Corneille even suppressed some of the more serious

elements of the Spanish — the first act where the worthy, dignified character of the father is developed — partly, it is true, to bring the more bulky Spanish play within the limit of the French five acts, but partly, it cannot be doubted, to better preserve the unity of feeling throughout the play. If we are to feel any real sympathetic interest in the father, the pranks of the son are no longer comical. We are taken at once from the gay atmosphere of farcical comedy, where an underlying consciousness of the unreality of the story keeps the perplexities of the father from being painful to us.

With all these faults, however, and in spite of Steele's assertion as to the effect of the piety of his comedy,[1] it cannot be said to have been a complete failure. With Nance Oldfield's lively tongue speaking Victoria's part (Lucrèce), and with Colley Cibber in one of his good parts as *gracioso* — the comic servant of the hero — it must have been amusing. It was performed six times, according to Genest, which is not bad luck.

[1] Steele's own idea of the significance of the *Liar* in connection with Collier's crusade may be seen from the motto he puts on the title-page, "Haec nosse salus est adolescentulis."

The reference in the preface to bringing his hero from France would seem to indicate that Steele wished his readers to think that he drew his material entirely from Corneille. There are several indications, however, that he knew and had read carefully the *Mistaken Beauty*. In the first act in the description of the river fête, he suddenly breaks from his familiar chatty prose into the same sort of pseudo-verse with which the author of the *Mistaken Beauty* treats the same theme. As there is no reason whatever for this sudden change of treatment in either the French or Spanish, the coincidence can scarcely mean anything but that Steele drew some of his ideas from the seventeenth-century translator.

In this desire to conceal the real source of his comedy, Steele is like the next adapter of *Le Menteur*, who treats both Steele and Corneille as Steele treated the *Mistaken Beauty*. It is a long interval to the next translation of *Le Menteur*, but to make the chronology of this play complete it may be reported at this time. Samuel Foote, of dubious reputation and undoubted comic talent, nearly sixty years after Steele's *Liar* had not succeeded, thought he could bet-

ter it. He accordingly produced *The Lyar*, in which he took the title rôle on January 12, 1762, at Covent Garden. In his prologue he claims to have taken his hero from Spain:

> We bring to-night a stranger on the stage,
> His sire De Vega; we confess the truth
> Lest you mistake him for a British youth.

And after a comical defence of his habit of ridiculing living persons, he forbids any one to see a caricature in this play in the following words:

> But in the following group let no man dare,
> To claim a limb, nay, not a single hair;
> What gallant Briton can be such a sot
> To own the child a Spaniard has begot?

If Foote intended by this to draw attention away from his indebtedness to his more immediate predecessors, he succeeded only partially. The *Monthly Review* (Vol. XXXI. p. 153) does seem to be deceived, for it gives a long and very favorable criticism of the "new comedy," reprinting a whole scene as a sample, praising the vivacity and humor which Foote always displays, and nowhere making any mention of a source other than the original Spanish. Doran speaks of it as original, but this must be an

oversight. The *Lying Lover* was after all a work of the same century, and Steele was a well-known figure. All the authorities of a later date recognize his sources with perfect ease. Genest[1] indeed shows remarkable penetration. He read, it is to be supposed, neither the French nor Spanish originals, yet he chooses for his proofs of Foote's cribbing from Steele two passages, which are precisely the ones most completely detached from either of the foreign versions. It is true that he had the *Mistaken Beauty* as a sort of guide, but that is not a very trustworthy witness. A fact further corroborating Genest's contemptuous refusal to believe Foote's claim to an exclusively Spanish source, and one which he probably could not know, is that although Foote worked over the comedy, in many ways altering the story and differing from all three of his models in some points, he never by any chance hits upon a variant which even faintly recalls the Spanish comedy which he insists is his original. On the other hand, he evidently did not limit his attentions to Steele, for there are a few indications here and there of a knowledge on his part

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. IV. p. 649.

of either the *Mistaken Beauty* or *Le Menteur*. In the scene at the end of the second act of the French there is a joke about the rapidity with which Dorante gets into the thick of fashionable city life:

> Vienne encore un procès, et je suis achevé.
> D'aujourd'hui seulement je produis mon visage
> Et j'ai déjà querelle, amour et mariage.

This reference to the lawsuit is faithfully reproduced in the *Mistaken Beauty*, omitted in Steele's *Lying Lover*, and inserted in Foote's *Lyar*, copied almost verbatim.

But after all, the question of where Foote got his material is a minor one, compared to the all-important one of what he did with it. He at once excuses his lack of candor by making really excellent use of the main outlines of the story. He simplifies the action somewhat, reducing the comedy to three acts, rejects wisely Steele's absurd and hysterical ending, and carries the lively story to a lively conclusion, with an invention of his own which savors of farce but which is infinitely more suited to the brisk and unsentimental tone of the comedy as a whole.

The *Biographica Dramatica* takes especial pains to record "the incomparable acting of the late Mr. John Palmer in this piece. Human nature was never, perhaps, more perfectly represented on the stage than by his performance of the principal character in this piece." As Foote himself played Young Wilding (Dorante) in the first performances, this note would seem to show that the play held its place on the stage after its author's day. Unless, indeed, Palmer played in the farce which the *Biographica Dramatica* mentions in its notice of the comedy: "It has since been reduced to a farce, and in that state is frequently acted." (This in 1812.) Foote's three-act comedy has already many of the elements of a farce, and it is not surprising to find that some one carried it the one step farther. This farce is the sixth generation from *La Verdad Sospechosa;* but it is so much changed that it can scarcely be counted as a member of the family.

IX. PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS

With the next tragedy translated we are on the outskirts of the battle, and the classical party begin the action by their attitude towards the *Phædra and Hippolitus* of Edmund Smith.

It is not necessary to go into the details of Smith's somewhat irregular life. It is enough to say that he matriculated at Oxford in 1688, was a thorough scholar, knew well Greek and Latin and several modern languages, was highly unscholastic in his behavior. In 1700 his place was declared "void, he having been convicted of riotous behaviour in the house of Mr. Cole, an apothecary," and in December of 1705, at the age of thirty-three, he was expelled. He came up to London and became an enthusiastic Whig. Addison and a number of other influential literary men were at once attracted by the winning ne'er-do-weel, and he soon had a company of powerful friends. Johnson says

neatly of him, "He was one of those lucky writers who are mentioned with reverence rather for the possession than the exertion of uncommon abilities." He is said to have been unusually handsome, and as careless in his dress as in matters of conduct, so that he was called the "Handsome Sloven" or "Captain Rag." This personal charm of Smith's is mentioned because it is probably partly due to it that he obtained such warm support for his far from valuable translation of *Phèdre*.

Another reason for the warmth of his reception by the critics was the bitter antipathy felt by English men of letters of that day for the Italian opera. They seem to have feared honestly lest the immense popularity of this comparatively new form of entertainment threaten the legitimate English stage. It seems from this distance as though almost anything would have formed a better counter-attraction to opera than Smith's tragedy; but its lack of success was evidently a complete surprise and an unexpected disappointment to Addison and his circle of adherents. They had done their best for the new play in every way.

It was presented under what must have been

very favorable circumstances. The best of the Haymarket company appeared, Theseus being taken by Betterton, Hippolitus by Booth, Phædra by Mrs. Barry, and Ismena by Mrs. Oldfield — what would be called now a star cast. Addison himself wrote the prologue, which was spoken by Mr. Wilkes. It is composed almost exclusively of an attack on the Italian opera and on music in general. He ends by saying that the intelligibility of the play will doubtless be a detriment to it, and that the audience would probably be more satisfied to have Hippolitus sing his speeches in Greek :

> But he, a stranger to your modish way,
> By your old Rules must stand or fall to-day;
> And hopes you will your foreign Taste command
> To bear, for once, with what you understand.

In the consideration of the play itself it is a little hard to tell how much comes from Smith's Latin and Greek sources, and how much directly from the French; but a careful comparison of his text with that of Euripides, Seneca, and Racine inclines one to think that a great deal more comes from Racine than is usually granted.

It would be too long a matter to give here

all the passages corroborating this conclusion, but a few may be chosen. Genest says: "When Phædra enters in the first act several speeches are taken from Euripides. They are the best in the play." This is one of the passages where Racine has most closely followed Euripides; but even here it may be seen that Smith has followed rather Racine's amplification of these speeches than the terse original (Act I. Scene 3):

> Stay, Virgins, stay, I'll rest my weary Steps;
> My strength forsakes me, and my dazzled eyes
> Ake with the flashing light, my loosened knees
> Sink under their dull Weight; support me, Lycon.
> Alas! I faint.[1]

There are many such instances where, to one not knowing the French, Smith would seem to follow the Greek.

But there is still more conclusive evidence in

[1] (Euripides.) Support me, hold up my head, all the strength of my limbs is gone. Women, support my fair arms.

Phèdre. N'allons point plus avant. Demeurons, chère Œnone
Je ne me soutiens plus; ma force m'abandonne:
Mes yeux sont éblouis du jour que je revoi;
Et mes genoux tremblants se dérobent sous moi.
Hélas!

various passages where expressions of Racine are used that are not in the Greek at all.

(Racine.) *Œnone.* Dieux tout-puissants que nos pleurs. . . .

(Smith.) *Lycon.* Afford her ease, Kind Heaven.

(Racine.) Quand pourrai-je au travers d'une *noble* poussière. . . .

(Smith.) And in the *noble* Dust the chariot's lost.

This peculiar expression translated literally is very noticeable.

(Racine.) *Œnone.* Ah s'il faut rougir, rougissez d'un silence. . . .

(Smith.) *Lycon.* Blush then, but blush for your destructive silence.

It is perfectly true that Smith has not made a translation of Racine, as will be only too evident when his ending is recounted, but the main body of his plot and very many speeches are lifted bodily. He introduces Ismena and makes Hippolitus in love. This certainly can be referred to nothing but an imitation of Racine.

From about the middle of the fourth act Smith abandons all guides, Greek, Latin and French, and strikes out for himself a truly British ending. He follows the tactics adopted

later by Colley Cibber in his *Heroick Daughter*, and makes his tragedy end happily. Hippolitus is led off by guards after Phædra denounces him, and a little later a messenger announces that he has stabbed himself. The intervention of Neptune is wholly omitted. Phædra, upon hearing that Hippolitus is dead, kills herself after a long burst of conventional fifth-act ravings — wholly of Smith's inventions:

> See, Hell sets wide its Adamantine Gates,
> See, thro' the sable gates the black Cocytus
> In smoaky Circles rolls its Firey Waves,
> Hear, hear the stunning Harmonies of Woe,
> The Din of rattling Chains, of clashing whips, etc.

Ismena "offers to stab herself," but at this point Hippolitus enters safe and sound, having had too much British good sense to stab himself. Theseus gives Ismena to him with the following blessing:

> Be this thy Doom
> To live forever in Ismena's arms.
> Go, heavenly Pair and with your dazzling Virtues,
> Your courage, Truth, your Innocence and Love
> Amaze and charm Mankind.

To which Ismena answers, "O killing Joy!" and Hippolitus, "Oh Extasy of Bliss!" This

absurd variation from the well-known legend is defended at the end of the play by a speech from Hippolitus:

> The righteous Gods that Innocence require
> Protect the Goodness which themselves inspire.
> Unguarded Virtue human Arts defies
> Th' Accused is happy while th' Accuser dies.
> [*Exeunt omnes.*

It must have been a grievous surprise to Smith and his friends to find that a tragedy so thoughtfully arranged for the benefit of the sensibilities of the British public, should meet with so little favor at its hands. This change in the ending seems incredibly ludicrous now, and it is difficult to conceive how Addison could have been sincere in his praises of it.

It can easily be seen from these extracts that the style is by no means excellent, and this is especially true as soon as Smith leaves the guidance of Racine and goes his own way. Before that, and especially in the passages where he follows more closely his great original, he produces some lines that are fair examples of the swelling grandiose style in which he chose to write. There is no doubt that part of the admiration of the critics of that day is due to the fact that

the bare story of Phædra, in whatever form it be embodied, is a moving and a tragic one—a tribute indeed when Smith's pompous style is taken into account.

Certainly no effort was spared to make this tragedy acceptable to the British audiences of that period. In addition to the happy ending and the sentimentality of Hippolitus's last scene with Ismena, there was an epilogue written by the popular Matt Prior, which balances on the very edge of coarseness and occasionally tips the wrong way. This merry mockery of Phædra's plight and treatment of her as though she were a London merchant's wife, lost nothing of its salt by issuing from the spicy lips of Nance Oldfield.

In a fourth edition in 1729 (it seems to have been read eagerly enough by the public if it was not witnessed with any enthusiasm) there is a "Character of Mr. Smith" prefixed by two of his Oxford friends. They speak of him with great admiration, as was natural, and that the idea that *Phædra* was a great work was still prevalent, this passage will testify:

"His *Phædra* is a consummate Tragedy and the Success of it was as great as the most

sanguine Expectations of his Friends could promise or foresee. The Number of Nights and the common Method of filling the House are not always the surest Marks of judging what Encouragement a Play meets with." (Addison says the play was hardly heard the second night and was taken from the stage after the fourth.) "But the Generosity of all Persons of a refined taste about Town was remarkable on this Occasion. . . . and it must not be forgotten how zealously Mr. Addison espoused his Interest with all the elegant Judgment and diffusive Good-Nature for which that distinguished Gentleman and Author is so justly valued by Mankind. But as to Phædra, she has certainly made a finer Figure upon the English Stage than either in Rome or Athens; and if she excells the Greek and Latin Phædra, I need not say she surpasses the French one."

This was not an isolated opinion. The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives several proofs of a general feeling among people of letters that the play was a great one, and Addison expresses himself most vigorously in Number 18 of the *Spectator* upon the degeneracy of the times. "Would one think it was

possible at a time when an Author lived who was able to write the *Phædra and Hippolitus* for a People to be so stupidly fond of the Italian Opera as scarce to give a third Day's Hearing to that admirable Tragedy?"

This was one of the first of the translations, and it found only a small audience of cultured people ready to admire it for its classical tone. The great throng of theatre-goers scoffed at it. Later on, after long series of translations from classic tragedy were imposed upon them, they grew more accustomed to the new fashion, and Genest records eight revivals of *Phædra and Hippolitus*. Baker says, "It is an admirable play and still continued on the list of acting tragedies; yet it met at first with scant encouragement from audiences." In 1723 it was revived for the first time at Lincoln's Inn Fields and played three times, in 1754 at Drury Lane it was acted three times, and in November of the same year twice at Covent Garden. This occasion is interesting because Peg Woffington played Phædra, a singular rôle for the light-hearted Irish actress. She must have liked the rôle and have been successful in it, for two years later she acted it again, and later in that same

year once more. Hitchcock[1] reports that in 1758 it was played in Dublin, but on that evening and the one when *Tancred* was played, the box-office receipts were lower than on any other evenings of the season, the receipts for *Phædra* being only £44 when the average was £77. It was presented in 1774 and in 1775, and this is the end of a long record and one more successful than almost any other of the translations made from Racine and Corneille. It seems that Addison and his followers were only a little ahead of their time in predicting, in so confident a manner, success for the tragedy. The difficulty about its first representation was that it was a pioneer and suffered the hard fate of most pioneers.

[1] *History of the Irish Stage.*

X. THE DISTRESSED MOTHER

After the *Phædra and Hippolitus* of Edmund Smith had met with such an extremely moderate success, six years passed before another author was brave enough to risk another attempt. But in 1712, on March 17th, there appeared what was to be by all odds the most popular and successful translation of a French tragedy ever produced, — the *Distrest Mother* of Ambrose Philips, translated and slightly adapted from *Andromaque.*

On the 1st of February, 1712, Steele wrote a very complimentary announcement of the new play. Nearly that entire number of the *Spectator* is given up to a tantalizing account of the excellences of the tragedy, calculated to arouse the curiosity of the public. Steele says: "I must confess, though some days are passed since I enjoyed that entertainment (*i.e.* reading the Mss. of the *Distrest Mother*), the passions of the several characters dwell strongly upon my imagination; I congratulate the age

that they are at last to see truth and human life represented in the incidents which concern heroes and heroines. It was a most exquisite pleasure to observe real tears drop from the eyes of those who had long made it their profession to dissemble affliction; and the player who read frequently threw down the book until he had given vent to the humanity which rose in him at some irresistible touches of the imagined sorrow. . . . My friend Will Honeycomb commended several things that were said and told me they were very genteel; but whispered me that he feared the piece was not busy enough for the present taste. To supply this he recommended to the players to be very careful in their scenes; and above all things that every part should be perfectly new dressed."

He forestalls the objection which many British critics of that time made to the story — *i.e.* that there is no real reason why Andromache should not marry Pyrrhus, by saying that had she done so, "she might still be an honest woman but no heroine." "The town has an opportunity of doing itself justice in supporting the representation of passion, sorrow, indignation, and even despair itself within the rules of

decency, honour, and good breeding." In this last sentence is heard the note of the classical side of the struggle against the license of the Shakespearian tragedy.

As in the case of Smith, no effort was spared by the Addison-Steele coterie to launch triumphantly a man who had written a classical tragedy which they were trying to introduce on the English stage, and who was, moreover, a zealous Whig. But there were a number of differences between the two attempts. In the six years since Smith's failure they had grown greatly in influence and fame, and the *Spectator* was a power of great note. They had, moreover, a very different person from the slovenly Bohemian, "Captain Rag" of the *Phædra*, in decent Ambrose Philips, already known for his *Epistle to the Earl of Dorset* and his famous *Pastorals*. Further than this, their man had chosen for translation the tragedy above all others calculated to appeal to English tastes. An unhappy widow struggling to remain faithful to her husband and to protect her child — what theme could be more welcome to the sentimental audiences of the eighteenth century? Jeremy Collier's fierce attack on the dirty com-

edies of the Restoration had produced a wave of reaction against immoral plays — what could be more moral than this weeping mother? The very subject of *Phædra and Hippolitus* was unpleasant to the newly quickened consciences of that period. This difference between the two tragedies was consciously felt by the public, and is alluded to in a pamphlet[1] written about the great success of the *Distrest Mother* in 1712. The author speaks of the reproaches which were heaped upon the tastelessness of the English audience by the *Spectator* when the *Phædra* failed, and claims that it was a wholesome instinct which made that tragedy unpopular and not at all the fact that it was written in the classical style. "The whole Fabrick of the play was built upon a rotten foundation . . . a Subject so rank as (notwithstanding the wondrous performance of Mrs. Barry) even nauseated the whole or at least the sober part of the Audience."

A play like *Cinna*, where Roman politics and a woman's fierce desire for revenge form the theme, could not in the nature of things interest

[1] *A Modest Survey of that Celebrated Tragedy, the Distrest Mother*, London, 1712.

a public which knew almost nothing of Roman politics and which demanded what modern American playwrights call a "heart interest." The *Cid* had more points of sympathy, but the Spanish point of honor was foreign to England; and as for *Pompey*, that was again Roman politics. No one needed any knowledge of history to feel for a heroine placed in the situation of Andromache.

The benevolent efforts of Philips's friends did not stop with preliminary laudatory announcements. The audience of the first night was filled with adherents of the author, and every attempt was made to have the first representation the great night of the season. This time the little clique had developed into a powerful assembly of literary people who were all eagerness to introduce classical tragedy into English letters, and they were strong enough to carry their point. It was the great night of the season. All witnesses confirm this, although many attempt to belittle the significance by insisting that it was a wholly artificial success due entirely to the support of Addison and Steele. Ward himself says bluntly, "The efforts of Steele and Addison to buoy up its

theatrical success have succeeded in securing to it a place among the remembered productions of our dramatic literature." Doran[1] says, "The English piece is even duller than the French one but there is good scope for declamatory actors." Genest[2] assigns the same reason for its popularity: "No circumstance to recommend it but affords good scope of acting." Genest is very much annoyed by the fact that "the word 'Madam' occurs fifty-four times." Dr. Johnson's sole comment on the merits of the *Distrest Mother* are, "Of the *Distrest Mother* not much is pretended to be his own and therefore it is no subject of criticism. Such a work requires no uncommon power."[3]

These extracts show that the critics of later days are by no means enthusiastic about the tragedy, and regard it as one of the purely ephemeral triumphs assured by the ill-considered partiality of contemporary critics. But there is more in the continued success of the tragedy than can be accounted for in this way. The sure mark of an artificial success is its

[1] *Annals of the English Stage*, Vol. I. p. 321.
[2] *Some Account*, Vol. II. p. 496.
[3] See preface and life of A. Philips in *British Poets*.

lack of permanency. Now the *Distrest Mother* had not only large audiences and a long run when it first appeared, but it continued during the whole of the eighteenth century to hold the stage with only infrequent intervals of absence. Every great actress of the century played the title rôle of *Hermione* many times, and it was continually represented by the best companies in the kingdom. It was one of the favorites in the provinces as well as in London, was played by the London troupes in their visits to Liverpool, Manchester, Bath, and other provincial "stands"; and was especially liked in Dublin, which seems always to have been partial to French masterpieces.

Hitchcock (*History of the Irish Stage*) says that in January of 1732 it was decided to give a play by amateurs at the Castle of the Lord Lieutenant. The *Distrest Mother* was chosen for its great fame and decorous character, and "was acted at the council chamber, in the Castle of Dublin. Lord Viscount Mountjoy, Lord Viscount Kingsland, and other persons of quality of both sexes supported the different characters. The room was fitted out in the most elegant stile. All the chambers and

passages were illuminated with wax. There was a crowded audience of persons of the first rank in the kingdom, and the whole was conducted with the greatest regularity and decorum."

We hear again and again all through the annals of the stage in that century that the *Distrest Mother* was selected by some famous actor or actress for a farewell appearance or for some other important performance. Hitchcock tells us that Mrs. Cibber bade adieu to Ireland in the character of Andromache, and that Peg Woffington, in 1751, almost forty years after the first representation of the tragedy, chose for her début in Ireland one tragic rôle and one comic one, Andromache being the tragic one. The same historian writes that, in 1759, "Mr. Barry (the great star of the company then visiting Dublin) judiciously reserved himself till the season was somewhat advanced. On Saturday, November 17, he came out with the utmost force and éclat in Orestes in the *Distrest Mother*. The play was commanded by the Lord Lieutenant. The characters were new dressed. No expense was spared and every circumstance concurred to

render the house uncommonly fashionable and brilliant." This sounds like a reminiscence of the cordial welcome by Dublin to Mrs. Philips's *Pompey*. Five years later, in 1764, Barry and a strong company presented the play in Cork.

But it must not be supposed that the *Distrest Mother* was like those dry works supposed to be improving and played only in the provinces, while the capital passes them by as out-of-date. A long list of performances given through each winter at Covent Garden and Drury Lane shows that London still admired Philips's work as a masterpiece, and the very considerable number of times it was chosen for benefit nights and first appearances gives proof that actors and managers of the best theatres in the country were convinced of its popularity with the theatre-going public.

In 1726 Booth made his first appearance after a serious illness, in the character of Pyrrhus, and was rapturously received, so Theophilus Cibber tells us. In 1736 Cibber chose the play for his benefit. In 1744 the *Distrest Mother* was chosen, as the playbills of the time announce, "At the Desire of several Persons of Distinction," for the reappearance

of Mrs. Roberts, after an absence of twelve years from the stage, and for the first appearance of Miss Jenny Cibber in the tragic rôle of Hermione. In 1750 Mrs. Woffington played Hermione at Covent Garden "for the first time of her attempting that rôle," while Mrs. Cibber played Andromache, — a combination which must have been well-nigh irresistible. In 1755 Mrs. Graham chose this play for her first appearance. But as a climax to this series of benefits and first appearances there came what must have been a most notable performance of the play in 1782 (seventy years after it was written), when Mrs. Siddons chose it for her benefit and made it a special occasion by announcing that at the end of the play Mrs. Siddons "will deliver a poetical address written by herself in the course of which she will produce to the audience three reasons for her quitting the stage." [1] Mrs. Summers, a fellow-actress, says that her three children were the three reasons, and that they were kept in her dressing room till they were wanted on the stage : not even the actors knowing what she

[1] This only refers to her leaving Bath to go up to London for her permanent engagement.

meant to do. Andromache was one of Mrs. Siddons's most favored rôles and was very frequently chosen for her benefits. In 1786 she acted Hermione for the first time, also at a benefit.

Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*, 1st ed.), writing in 1764, says of the *Distrest Mother*, "It is at this time a Standard of Entertainment at both Theatres, being generally repeated several times in the course of every season, and will perhaps ever continue to be a stock Play on the lists of the Theatres." Genest,[1] speaking with his usual grudging recognition of anything French, says in 1820, "This is an indifferent Tragedy, and yet it has continued on the acting list till the present times."

The reproach of artificiality in the first success of this piece and the claim that it owed its fame entirely to the efforts of a small literary clique must be largely modified when this record is surveyed. It may be true that the first-night audience was packed with friends of the author and was predisposed in his favor by the *Spectator*. But could this have exerted any influence on Kemble, when in 1803 he selected

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. IX. p. 565.

the play for a special performance in Bath? It cannot be denied that the *Spectator* was a great power when the tragedy first appeared, and that the public may have been urged by this influence to simulate an admiration not wholly genuine. But could this have forced Mrs. Siddons to choose the tragedy for her benefits, as she did again and again? It is impossible to deny the conclusion brought out by a study of the facts. A tragedy does not live for a century on borrowed vitality. Inflated and unnatural as it may seem to us now, Ambrose Philips's play must have appealed to a well-defined and sincere taste of the eighteenth century, and its popularity was a solid one.

To go back to the first of this long series of representations — it occurred at the most favorable time for such a production, when the enthusiasm for classic tragedy was in all the strength of its first vigor — only the year before *Cato* was given. The cast of actors presenting the play was the best that could be gathered together. George Powell (the *Spectator's* favorite) played Orestes, and Booth was Pyrrhus. Of his interpretation of this character the *Spectator* (March

24, 1712) says, "Whoever has seen Booth in the character of Pyrrhus march to his throne to receive Orestes is convinced that Majesty and great Conceptions are expressed in the very step. . . . No other man could perform that Incident as well as he does." Pylades was played by Mill, a utility actor of considerable reputation. Andromache was created by Mrs. Oldfield, who needs no introduction, and Hermione was taken by Mrs. Porter, the tragedy queen who for many years enjoyed so well-deserved an admiration. A more competent company could scarcely be found, and the applause which followed their work is not surprising.

We have a detailed account of how the play was presented by this first company, in the *Spectator* for March 25, 1712; in a pamphlet — *A Modest survey of that Celebrated Tragedy, the Distrest Mother, so often and so highly applauded by the Ingenious Spectator;* — and in various stage histories and biographies. We learn that Mrs. Porter was immensely admired as Hermione, and that Mill's Pylades became one of his favorite characters. The *Spectator* takes Sir Roger de Coverley to the theatre "for the first time these twenty years," drawn thither

by the great fame of the new tragedy. His comments are reported by Addison, and are most entertaining. "Upon the entering of Pyrrhus the knight told me he did not believe the king of France himself had a better strut:" another tribute to the majesty of Booth. Sir Roger was sure "Andromache would never have Pyrrhus, and added, 'You can't imagine, sir, what it is to have to do with a widow.'" He is very much surprised at the clear and simple language, which was of course one of the features of classic tragedy which Addison was most eager to emphasize. "Should your people in tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single sentence in this play that I do not know the meaning of!" He was sorry that Astyanax had not appeared; "he should have been very glad to see the little boy, who must needs have been a very fine child by the account that is given of him." But he was relieved that Pyrrhus was not killed in sight of the audience; another element of classic tragedy which the classicists were anxious to introduce. "He told me it was such a bloody piece of work that he was glad it was not done on the stage." Of the mad scene of Orestes

he remarks, "Orestes in his madness looks as if he saw something." He found Pylades "a very sensible man," and he says of him, "though he speaks little, I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them!" The whole account is a very artfully contrived piece of special pleading on Addison's part, calculated to forestall all of the objections which the average Englishman would raise to tragedy so formal and Gallic in its spirit.

As a proof of success, a very harsh criticism is almost as valuable as a favorable one. No one takes the pains to attack a failure. The *Distrest Mother* received this tribute, as it was bitterly attacked by the pamphlet mentioned before, — a *Modest Survey*, etc., — which furnished the necessary shadow to the picture of the tragedy's prosperity. In fifty-two pages octavo an anonymous author, alarmed by what he evidently considers an overwhelming tendency to Gallicize the English stage, attacks the *Distrest Mother* and all that it stands for. He says that the eminently moral character of the play has undoubtedly much to do with its success as compared with the failure of the *Phædra*. But with that observation any approach to praise ends.

He refuses all merit to Philips's share in the work, saying that his diction is bald, mean, and poor. It is curious to see what they term the "simplicity" of the style praised by Addison and attacked by others, when it seems to modern readers the reverse of either simplicity or clarity. The author of the pamphlet regrets also the absence of ornaments to the style in the way of high-flown and lengthy metaphors and sharp turns of wit. He complains that the author of the play has been niggardly with his store of good things and has "beaten his wit thin" to make the quantity of it seem more. But it is against the play itself that he launches his sharpest shafts. Andromache seems to him the most absurd and illogical of characters. "Why," he inquires, "should she *not* marry Pyrrhus?" He was a good man, very much in love with her, and willing to do well by her son. He for his part, if he had been Hector, would have been very much provoked by this foolish sentimentality. What better could she expect than to be well taken care of all her life, and see her son refounding the Trojan line? As for Andromache's plan of marrying Pyrrhus and killing herself at once, he denounces it as

the most shameless of cheats. His British commercial sense of honor revolts against Pyrrhus, paying so high a price for what he doesn't get. "Andromache is a romantic, vaporing fool, as well as a heartless cheat and jilt." As to Pyrrhus, he was a fool who deserved no better fate, for so exposing himself on his wedding day that Orestes could kill him and get safely away. The pamphleteer proposes a modification in the plot, *i.e.* that Andromache should have a visit from Hector's ghost, commanding her to stop her high-flown hysterics, to marry Pyrrhus like a sensible woman, and thank her fate for the chance. At the close the pamphleteer disclaims any pique or personal feeling as the motive of this attack: "An honest and hearty Warmth for the Honour of the British Poetry in Discouragement of all French importations of this kind unless better refined and cleaned from their original Dross and Rubbish; as justly disclaiming that everything that glistered in France should pass for current in England." The warmth of this attack is a strong tribute to the success of the play. The fear of a French invasion of the English stage is only shown when adaptations are receiving considerable popular favor.

One of the most interesting things in the history of this play is the immense popularity of the epilogue, which is said to be one of the most successful ever written in English. It was ostensibly written by Eustace Budgell, but probably by Addison himself, and was the occasion of a war of words in the *Spectator* which lasted through several numbers. First came a letter criticising very severely the light tone of the epilogue, and saying that the effect of the whole tragedy, "which had gradually worked my soul up to the highest pitch," was totally destroyed by the mockery of Mrs. Oldfield as she recited the epilogue. Three days later came another letter (ostensibly from another correspondent) from Addison himself, defending his work with the utmost warmth. It begins, "I am amazed to find an epilogue attacked in your last Friday's paper which has been so generally applauded by the town and received such honor as was never before given to any in an English theatre. The audience would not permit Mrs. Oldfield to go off the stage the first night till she had repeated it twice; the second night the noise of encoring was as loud as before, and she was again

obliged to speak it twice; the third night it was still called for a second time, and, in short, contrary to all other epilogues, which are dropped after the first representation, this has already been repeated nine times." He goes on to say that all tradition is on his side, and quotes the far too gay epilogues of Dryden and other Restoration poets; also the epilogue to *Phædra and Hippolitus*, where he had the authority of Matt Prior back of him. More than this, he cites the French custom of having a merry little farce after a tragedy, and says that for his part he is not ill pleased to be sent home in a good humor instead of weeping over the fatal tangle of passions presented to him. It will perhaps be easier to form an accurate judgment on this epilogue so much discussed if it is reproduced.

I hope you'll own that with becoming art
I've played my game and topped the widow's part.
My spouse, poor man, could not live out the play,
But died commodiously on his wedding day;
While I, his relict, made at one bold fling,
Myself a princess, and young Sty a king.
  You, ladies, who protract a lover's pain,
And hear your servants sigh whole years in vain;
Which of you all would not on marriage venture,

Might she so soon upon her jointure enter?
'Twas a strange 'scape! Had Pyrrhus lived till now,
I had been finely hampered in my vow.
To die by one's own hand and fly the charms
Of love and life in a young monarch's arms.
'Twere a hard fate — ere I had undergone it,
I might have took one night — to think upon it.
But why, you'll say, was all this grief expressed
For a first husband long since laid to rest?
Why so much coldness to my kind protector?
Ah, ladies, had you known the good man Hector!
Homer will tell you, (or I'm misinformed)
That, when enrag'd, the Grecian camp he stormed,
To break the tenfold barriers of the gate
He threw a stone of such prodigious weight
As no two men could lift, not even of those
Who in that age of thundering mortals rose;
It would have sprain'd a dozen modern beaus.
At length, howe'er, I laid my weeds aside,
And sunk the widow in the well-dressed bride.
In you it still remains to grace the play,
And bless with joy my coronation day;
Take, then, ye circles of the brave and fair,
The fatherless and widow to your care.

It seems probable that the enthusiasm which greeted this somewhat heavy-handed joking after seeing a version of *Andromaque* was of the same variety as Pepys's joy at the Dutch clowns, after *Horace*. However that may be, the epilogue continued famous almost as long

as the play did, and as late as 1770 playbills announce that after the representation of the *Distrest Mother* the "famous original epilogue" would be given.

After all these evidences of unusual success which the tragedy obtained, one turns with a lively interest to the consideration of the work of Mr. Philips itself to see what sort of a translation it was which aroused such enthusiasm and held it so long. (Act I. Scene 2.)

Orestes. Before I speak the message of the Greeks
Permit me, sir, to glory in the Title
Of their Ambassador: since I behold
Troy's vanquisher and great Achilles' son.
Nor does the Son rise short of such a Father.
If Hector fell by him Troy fell by you.
But what your Father never would have done,
You do. You cherish the Remains of Troy
And, by an ill-timed Pity, keep alive
The dying embers of a ten-years War.[1]

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[1] *Orestes.* Avant que tous les Grecs vous parlent par ma voix,
Souffrez que j'ose ici me flatter de leur choix
Et qu' à vos yeux, Seigneur, je montre quelque joie
De voir le fils d'Achille et le vainqueur de Troie.
Oui, comme ses exploits, nous admirons vos coups:
Hector tomba sous lui, Troie expira sous vous;
Et vous avez montré par une heureuse audace,
Que le fils seul d'Achille a pu remplir sa place.

This is a very good example of Philips's style, correct, dignified, quite close to the French yet losing almost entirely the lift and emphasis of the original. It can almost never be said that he has failed to render the meaning of a phrase of Racine's, and almost as seldom that he has really secured the same quality, or even one of his own which is of the same nature as Racine's elegant and polished perfection of wording. (Same scene.)

Pyrrhus. No! Let them come; since I was born to wage
Eternal Wars. Let them now turn their Arms
On him who conquered for them; Let them come
And in Epirus seek another Troy
'Twas thus they recompens'd my Godlike Sire;
Thus was Achilles thank'd; But, Prince, remember
Their black Ingratitude then cost them dear.
Orestes. Shall Greece then find a Rebel Son in Pyrrhus?
Pyrrhus. Have I then conquered to depend on Greece?
Orestes. Hermione will sway your Soul to Peace
And mediate 'twixt her Father and yourself.[1]

Mais ce qu'il n'eût point fait, la Grèce avec douleur
Vous voit du sang troyen relever le malheur,
Et vous laissant toucher d'une pitié funeste,
D'une guerre si longue entretenir le reste.

[1] *Pyrrhus.* Non, non. J'y consens avec joie:
Qu'ils cherchent dans l'Epire une seconde Troie;

In shorter speeches like these, Philips is closer to the French than in the long declamatory ones where he picks and chooses, from perhaps forty lines, twenty-five for reproduction. This shortening of speeches is really the most serious change which he introduces, and is a very sensible one for a play which is to be actually performed. Many very long speeches are cut in presenting them at the Théâtre Français to-day. As far as adapting in the usual English sense, there is very little of it. The scenes and acts are arranged in very much the same order and with very much the same contents as in the original except for the abbreviating already referred to. It could scarcely be expected that an eighteenth-century trans-

Qu'ils confondent leur haine et ne distinguent plus
Le sang qui les fit vaincre et celui des vaincus.
Aussi bien ce n'est pas la première injustice
Dont la Grèce d'Achille a payé le service.
Hector en profita, seigneur ; et quelque jour
Son fils en pourrait bien profiter à son tour.

Oreste. Ainsi la Grèce en vous trouve un enfant rebelle ?

Pyrrhus. Et je n'ai donc vaincu que pour dépendre d'elle ?

Oreste. Hermione, Seigneur, arrêtera vos coups ;
Ses yeux s'opposeront entre son père et vous.

lator, however, could keep the ending exactly as he found it. Philips yielded to temptation to make as much of a happy ending as could be possible after Pyrrhus' death, by bringing Andromache once more on the scene to take possession, visibly, of her new power as queen and to be reunited to her son. She is overcome with grief for the death of Pyrrhus, which is inconsistent but spectacular, and proclaims that she will mourn for him till her death. The arrival of the young prince, her son, is announced, and the play ends with a moralizing rhymed sextet in which the author of the *Pastorals* is clearly discerned:

> Though plunged in Ills and exercised in Care
> Yet never let the noble mind despair
> When prest by dangers and beset with Foes
> The Gods their timely Succour interpose;
> And when our Vertue sinks, o'erwhelmed with Grief
> By unforeseen Expedients bring relief.

This adds one more confusion to her grief for the death of Pyrrhus.

Philips is a little too complacent in his treatment of the really stirring scenes of this tragedy. He has no idea of faithfully repro-

ducing every detail as does Mrs. Philips with *Pompée*. He is a poet on his own account, and has great confidence in his power to treat a situation quite as well as Racine. Take, for example, the scene after the murder of Pyrrhus by Orestes and the Greeks. Here, if anywhere, a really faithful and judicious translator would have clung to his text as closely as he could, in an effort to render the matchless perfection of his author. This is what Philips does :

Hermione. Peace, Monster, Peace ! — Go tell thy horrid tale
To Savages and howl it out in Desarts.
Wouldst thou impute to me thy monstrous Guilt?
Me wouldst thou make the Accomplice of thy Crimes?
Hence to thy Greeks! and boast thy foul exploits !
My Soul abhors them! I disclaim the deed!
Be gone ! I know thee not ! Thou fell Barbarian!
What had he done? What could provoke thy Madness
To assassinate so great, so brave a Man,
Who set thee on?
Orestes. Grant me Patience, heaven!
With your own lips did you not curse the Tyrant,
Pronounce his Death and urge me to destroy him?
Hermione. What if transported by my boundless Passion
I could not bear to see him wed another?
Were you to obey a jealous Woman's Phrenzy?
You should have dived into my most inmost thoughts;

My Heart though full of Rage was free from Malice;
And all my anger was excess of Love.[1]

This is very energetic and not without real fire, but it is unfortunate that it did not occur to Philips that Racine had regulated all the details of the scene better than he could. The situation itself is so stirring that a well-written version of it like this must have made a deep impression even if it is not a faithful rendering of the original. It can be seen all through

[1] *Hermione.* Tais-toi, perfide,
Et n'impute q'à toi ton lâche parricide.
Va faire chez tes Grecs admirer ta fureur,
Va, je la désavoue, et tu me fais horreur.
Barbare, qu'as tu fait? Avec quelle furie
As-tu tranché le cours d'une si belle vie!
Avez-vous pu, cruels, l'immoler aujourd'hui
Sans que tout votre sang se soulevât pour lui?
Mais, parle; de son sort qui t'a rendu l'arbitre?
Pourquoi l'assassiner? Qu'a-t-il fait? A quel titre?
Qui te l'a dit?
Oreste. Oh Dieux! Quoi! ne m'avez vous pas
Vous-même, ici, tantôt, ordonné son trépas?
Hermione. Ah! fallait-il en croire une amante insensée?
Ne devais-tu pas lire au fond de ma pensée?
Et ne voyais-tu pas, dans mes emportements
Que mon cœur démentait ma bouche à tous moments?
Quand je l'aurais voulu, fallait-il y souscrire?

the tragedy that a trained hand and a real talent are at work even if there be no spark of genius which would have fired the whole into a production worthy in all respects of the great original.

XI. COLLEY CIBBER

The success of Ambrose Philips seems to have encouraged Cibber to try his hand at translating and adapting a French play. As the author of the *Distrest Mother* had chosen the most popular work of Racine, Cibber, nothing daunted, selected Corneille's masterpiece. He brought on the stage, on November 28, 1712, an adaptation of the *Cid* under the title of *The Heroick Daughter or Ximena.* Contrary to the usual custom of the day this play was not printed till nine years after its first appearance. It was revived with considerable success in 1718, with an admirable cast. Mrs. Oldfield played the title rôle then, and probably created it in 1712. The year after its first appearance she chose it for her benefit. This would seem to indicate that she liked the rôle, and that the play had been received with considerable favor at its first representation. Indeed it was played eight times, what was considered then a run of some length.

The first edition of *The Heroick Daughter* attracted a vast deal of attention from a cause in no wise connected with the adaptation itself, but with a most indiscreet remark which the heedless Cibber introduced into his *Epistle of Dedication*, addressed to Sir Richard Steele. As the stir which this preface made brought *The Heroick Daughter* much more prominently to the attention of the public than its merits alone could have done, it may be well to note briefly the main points of the controversy. They will serve, moreover, as examples of the sort of strife into which the translations of this time were ushered.

Cibber, in the course of his compliments to Steele, spoke with much gratitude of the favor which the *Spectator* and the *Tatler* had shown the stage. This passage is interesting as showing the real practical influence of the literary men of that day, and as bringing out the fact that the admiration of Mr. Addison for a tragedy like the *Distrest Mother* meant more actually to the managers of that day than the admiration of a man of letters of similar standing would mean now. This difference ought not to be forgotten in attempting to under-

stand the situation. "How often have we known the most elegant Audiences drawn together at a Day's warning by the Influence or Warrant of a single *Tatler* in a season where our best Endeavors without it could not defray the charge of the Performance." Not willing to leave the compliment as it was, he wished to sharpen it by showing that to Steele alone was due the credit of those papers, and put Addison completely out of the question by saying that, when he is spoken of as part editor of the *Spectator*, Steele might well exclaim with Mark Antony:

> Fool that I was! upon my eagle wings
> I bore this Wren 'till I was tired with soaring
> And now he mounts above me!

Any one who is familiar with the feeling of that period can imagine the burst of indignant protest with which this comparison was received by the readers of *The Heroick Daughter*. Squibs and cuts at both Cibber and Steele appeared in various forms. One coming out in *Mist's Journal* for October 31, 1719, will serve as a good example of what poor Colley was forced to endure:

"Mr. Cibber the player, having newly dedi-

cated to Sir Richard Steele a translation of the *Cid*, a Tragedy written by the famous Mr. Corneille, wherein he very modestly confesses that he hath infinitely outdone the French original ; and that the late celebrated Mr. Addison owed all his reputation to Steele, the former of whom he compares to a Wren and the latter to an Eagle ; the following lines were written off Hand by one who has an odd Fancy that Cibber and Steele are inferior to Corneille and Addison ; which you may if you are of the same Opinion insert in your next Journal.

"Written in Cibber's *Heroic Daughter* dedicated to Sir R. Steele :

> "Thus Colley Cibber greets his Partner Steele
> See here, Sir Knight, how I've outdone Corneille!
> See here how I my Patron to inveigle
> Make Addison a Wren and you an Eagle!
> Safe to their silent Shades we bid defiance
> For living *Dogs* are better than dead *Lions!*"

This sort of running fire was kept up for months, until Steele took a step which must have hurt Cibber more than anything else. On January 2, 1720, there appeared the first number of *The Theatre, — to be continued every Tuesday and Saturday by Sir John Edgar.*

"Sir John Edgar" was a transparent *nom de plume* behind which Steele hid himself to conduct an elaborate defence against the storm of abuse which had burst on him as well as on Cibber, as a result of the latter's unhappy compliment. "Sir John Edgar" asseverates with the greatest solemnity that he has reason to be absolutely sure that Steele had no idea what was in the preface until the play actually appeared, irrevocably printed, and so was not in the least to blame for it. This attempt to shift all the blame upon Colley's irresponsible shoulders was by no means a success. Steele's incognito was penetrated almost at once by all who knew anything of the matter, and he was so heartily berated for this new move that he was forced to turn his *Theatre* to a consideration of the *South Sea Bubble*, and finally after only three months' existence to discontinue the paper altogether. He did not take this step, however, till the attention of the virulent Mr. Dennis was turned to the affair; and when Dennis began to express his mind, all that had gone before seemed like a war of compliments. He instituted at once the *Anti-Theatre* (Dennis was

nothing if not direct in his attacks), and in this periodical, which only ran during fifteen numbers, proceeded in all leisure to flay poor Colley and Steele. He says they stole everything they wrote for the stage from the French without giving credit to their originals. Of Steele's *Lying Lover* he remarks, after the severest blame, "I shall say no more of it than that it is a very wretched copy of a very indifferent original, — for Comedy was not the talent of Corneille." He says Cibber (of whom he speaks as Steele's Champion and Deputy Governor) "has made as bold with the French as you, and to as good a purpose; he has bravely turned the Tartuffe of Molière out of ridicule. But then, to commute for that offence, he has with equal bravery burlesqued the Cid of Corneille. We may guess at your future conduct from your past. You and your Deputy Governor will go on to borrow from the French, and continue to rail at them. It is not enough for some people to rob unless they likewise murder."

He quotes from *The Theatre:* "You say, 'In France they are delighted either with low and fantastical farces or tedious declamatory Tragedies.' How rarely this sounds from one who

has himself brought their plays upon the English Stage and set his name to them ; from one of whose Poetical works they make up the better half ; and lastly, from one who in his Speculations has so often and so fulsomely commended the bare translations of those Originals which he here decries. How angry were you once with the Town for not liking that wretched rhapsody, the 'Phædra' of *Captain Rag!*" He speaks of a number of unpleasant qualities which he accuses Steele and Cibber of having in common ; and "There is a third extraordinary quality, Sir John, which is common, to you and your Viceroy, which is, that for several years together, both of you have been the celebrated Authors of other people's works !"

One can imagine that the two good-natured adapters must have winced under this virulence.

The noise of this quarrel was still resounding as late as 1792, when John Bell, the publisher, put before an edition of *The Heroick Daughter* the following note: "In a strange dedication which we shall not suffer now to sully the fame of our comic Colley, he was weak enough to treat Steele as an Eagle and Addison as a Wren

— Such Prophanation he was afterwards wise enough to retrench (in later editions of the play). We spare his memory the opprobrium of seeing it here."

Enough has been said about this wretched dispute. The play itself is so curious a production that it well deserves examination for the sake of its peculiarities. Cibber devotes twelve pages to explanation of the changes he has made in the play and it would be difficult, without taking almost as much space, to consider fully all his alterations. The most important may be broadly indicated here. The rôle of the Infanta is suppressed. Cibber remarks judiciously, apropos of this change, "She is always dropping in like cold water upon the Heat of the Main Action." And then having shown such shrewd managerial instinct, he proceeds at once to nullify the good effect of it by introducing an absurd secondary character and plot—one Belzara, formerly betrothed to Don Sanchez, who after many tribulations, due to her lover's fondness for Chimena, receives him from the hand of the King at the end of the play.

A whole new first act is added to acquaint

the audience with the situation of Ximena and Carlos (Chimène and Rodrigue). He thinks "Corneille is very defective in this point," and does not hesitate to express his opinion in the most familiar and even slangy of terms. Indeed the predominant note in this preface is the unbounded complacence and self-assurance, deliciously absurd when one considers whom he is criticising so freely. He objects to Chimène's first appearance on the stage in the original, thus, "After Chimène is informed that her Father has allowed Rodrigue the Person most worthy of her, she thinks the news too good to be true and is still, (though she can't tell why) afraid it will come to nothing, and so quaintly walks off to as little purpose as she came on;" and further on he condemns Corneille for using what he calls an undignified device, as follows: "The King cunningly tells her that Rodrigue is dead of his Wounds, at which Chimène fainting, His Majesty fairly bites her, owns he is alive, etc." The use of this antiquated piece of eighteenth-century slang seems curiously appropriate in a reproof directed against undue familiarity.

The prologue is interesting in its reference

to Cibber's satisfaction with his work and to the new interest in classic tragedy:

> As France improved it from the Spanish Pen
> We hope, now British, 'tis improved again;
> And though lost Tragedy has long seemed dead,
> Yet, having lately raised her awful Head,
> To-night with Pains and Cost we humbly strive
> To keep the spirit of that taste alive.

How awful a head Corneille's tragedy is made to rear may be judged when Cibber's ending is considered; for like Edmund Smith he thought the French ending too sad a one, and like him adopted the most childlike method of making it cheerful — that is, the resuscitation of a character supposed to be dead. Ximena's father reappears at the end of the play, not killed at all by Carlos, but wounded enough to chasten his spirit and remove the only obstacle between his daughter and Carlos; who forthwith rush into each other's arms with exclamations of joy very like those of the earlier Ismena and Hippolitus, rescued, like them, from the unkind fate which had separated them for so many years till a British playwright came upon them. The epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Oldfield as Ximena, says of this extraordinary change:

Well, Sirs!
I've come to tell you that my Fears are over,
I've seen Papa and have secured my lover.
And, troth, I'm wholly on our Author's side,
For had (as Corneille made him) Gormez died,
My Part had ended as it first begun,
And left me still unmarryed and undone.

In spite of all these violent changes, there still remain many passages where Cibber admits that Corneille has value, and follows him closely. His translation is of the very free variety that is characteristic of this period and this kind of writing. The conscientious literary translators of the Restoration are far away from these practical playwrights who adapt their work to the actual stage, to the English stage, and to the English stage of that period with all its traditions and conventions. It is not fair to judge the work of a man like Cibber by the same standard as that applicable to Mrs. Philips. He was no literary man by profession, in spite of his Laureateship; he was an actor, and above all a manager — a Henry Irving or David Belasco of the eighteenth century. He had no idea of adding to the knowledge or broadening the taste of the British public, like Smith or Philips, both University men. He wished

simply to produce something which would please the public and give good rôles to the leading members of his company. It is true, he was sincerely convinced that he had actually bettered Corneille, but that was looking at the play from a purely practical standpoint. Cibber's own view of his practice of altering plays may be seen from his *Letter to Mr. Pope* (1742) when at last, stung by the torrent of abuse which Pope had been directing at him, he breaks his good-natured silence and defends himself. Referring to Pope's

> A past vamp'd future, old reviv'd new piece,
> 'Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Shakespear, and Corneille
> Can make a Cibber, Tibbold, or Ozell;

Cibber says in the first place that several of his plays are original, and then, of his translations, "Is a Tailor that can make a new Coat well, the worse Workman because he can mend an old one?" It is a simple practical matter to him, quite like making an old garment fit a new wearer.

The quality of Cibber's versification when he is avowedly translating may be seen from a passage like this (Act II. Scene 8):

Is he not dead? Is not my Father kill'd?
Have not these Eyes beheld his ghastly Wound
And mixt with Fruitless Tears his streaming Blood?
That Blood which in his Royal Master's Cause
So oft has sprung him thro' your Foes victorious,
That Blood which all the raging Swords of War
Could never reach, a young presumptious arm
Has dar'd within your View to sacrifice.[1]

Cibber has evidently found the famous *obscure clarté* too paradoxical to be intelligible to ordinary minds, for he translates it

At length the Brightness of the Moon presents . . .

which is certainly sufficiently matter-of-fact.

With this example of verse *The Heroick Daughter* of the worthy Cibber may be left, to take up a tragedy which has been attributed to him by nearly all the authorities, but which seems from internal evidence to be the work of an unknown translator. This appeared in 1713, and is a translation of *Cinna*, entitled *Cinna's Conspiracy*, which is one of the reasons why

[1] Sire, mon père est mort ; mes yeux ont vu son sang
Couler a gros bouillons de son généreux flanc ;
Ce sang qui tant de fois garantit vos murailles,
Ce sang qui tant de fois vous gagna des batailles,
Ce sang qui tout sorti fume encore de courroux
De se voir répandu pour d'autres que pour vous.

it seems scarcely probable that it is a work of Cibber's. With his keen instinct for what would suit the public, and his eye to the main chance, he would not have been likely to select a play where there is no action of any kind, where the speeches are even longer than is usual in French tragedy, where the elevation and dignity of the dialogue is unvarying, and where there is no opportunity for spectacular effects. It is true that the prologue, spoken by Cibber and possibly written by him, speaks with great contempt of the prevalent English taste for enlivening extras on the stage, — funny clowns, gorgeous stage pictures, tableaux, and crowds of actors, — but the prologue was written for the play alone, and means simply a justification of its anti-British qualities.

> We of the French their Stage Decorum prize,
> And justly such absurdities despise,
> Approve their unity of Place and Time,
> But shun their trivial Points and gaudy Rhime.

This last line is quite in character with Cibber's attitude toward the plays he adopted, but with the very first lines of the tragedy itself it seems almost certain that another spirit is dominant.

The work under consideration might with equal justice be called a free translation or a very close adaptation. A speech here and there is shortened, and a few scenes changed, but only a few. The second scene of Act I shows "Cinna and Maximus at the Head of the Conspirators," and after a few introductory remarks Cinna delivers to them in person the speech which in the French he tells at second hand to Emilie. A few speeches are added to fill up the scene, which is not a long one. This is the most important change in the whole translation, and is of course a change which in no wise affects the conduct of the story. This follows as closely as possible the French, both the text and spirit of the original. A few rhymed tags are put in at the end of scenes which, while entirely mediocre are not disagreeable or absurd, and do not seem too much out of place in the atmosphere of the play. This is an example :

> With soothing Baths and the smooth suppling Oyl
> The Body is refreshed, o'ercharged with Toil.
> And from a Friend's Advice, Relief we find
> From Doubts and Terrors that torment the Mind.

This fidelity to the text, except in the few instances just mentioned, is unusual for an

eighteenth-century translation, and is not at all characteristic of Cibber, who prided himself on his skill in making over foreign pieces so that they would suit the English stage. He would have seen somewhere in this story of imperial Rome an opportunity for a great mustering of stage soldiery or populace or courtiers, and he would have been almost certain to emphasize the love story at the expense of the political one. Genest says,[1] "This play has been ascribed to Cibber but with little probability, as no reason is assigned why he should conceal his name." This is perhaps the most cogent of all reasons for thinking that the author of *Cinna's Conspiracy* was not Cibber, but a translator with more taste for good literature than he, and less instinct for what would succeed in England. Cibber was not given to concealing his authorship under any circumstances, and he certainly could not have hesitated to put his name to a production which is on the whole more creditable than most of his own.

This translation of *Cinna* is rather remarkable from some points of view. It is throughout dignified, with few of the lapses into

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. II. p. 510.

triviality which mar the work of so many translators of the same century. But on the other hand at no place does it rise to the height of genuine feeling which is shown in occasional bursts in the work of contemporaries. It is correct, at times elegant, and always worthy, but there is not much glow to it. An extract will show the pleasing quality and also the lack of fire (Act V. Scene 2):

Emilia. With the same tenderness he cherished thine.
He was your Tutor and you his Assassin.
Cæsar from you I learned the Way to Guilt.
This difference there is 'Twixt yours and mine,
You to Ambition sacrificed my Father,
And a just fury of Revenge in Me
Would for his guiltless Blood your Blood have shed.
Livia. Emilia, it is too much; consider
Cæsar has well repay'd thy Father's care.
His Death, with which thy Memory inflames
Thy Fury, was the error of Augustus.[1]

---

[1] *Emilie.* Il éleva la vôtre avec même tendresse,
Il fut votre tuteur, et vous son assassin,
Et vous m'avez au crime enseigné le chemin,
Le mien d'avec le vôtre en ce point seul diffère,
Que votre ambition s'est immolé mon père,
Et qu'un juste courroux dont je me sens brûler
A son sang innocent voulait vous immoler.
Livie. C'est trop, Emilie, arrête et considère
Qu'il t'a trop bien payé les bienfaits de ton père.
Sa mort, dont la mémoire allume ta fureur
Fut un crime d'Octave et non de l'Empereur.

It is very difficult to know at what point of view to place one's self in order to form a just estimate of the value of these eighteenth-century adaptations, which have so distinct an atmosphere of their own. It is obviously not fair to judge them from the standpoint of the particular literary fashion of our own day. By such a standard this *Cinna's Conspiracy* would be at once condemned as a tiresome, prosy production. Yet compared with Cibber's *Heroick Daughter*, which was quite a success in its day, this tragedy is a dignified and worthy rendering of a noble original. Justice probably lies between the two extremes.

The epilogue (spoken by Mrs. Porter) shows that the writer was quite aware of the unusual quality of the tragedy and the faithfulness with which the tragic dignity of the French was reproduced.

> I laugh to think now, How those Wags are bit
> Who gape agog for wanton turns of wit,

is the beginning. Further on there is the usual mocking of the serious character of the play, which sounds so odd after these translations from the French:

> Livia well knew her Husband's cause was evil
> And told him that a tyrant, like the Devil,
> To make mankind his Vassals must be civil.

The tragedy met with no success, as might be expected when all the conditions are taken into consideration. It was played only three times, to small houses, and apparently never revived. It was published, but a second edition was never issued.

XII. JOHN OZELL

THE year after *Cinna's Conspiracy* had made its unsuccessful appearance, two translations from Racine and one from Corneille were published, made by John Ozell. He was the author of no less than thirty-seven translations, and apparently had no other claim than this to the title of literary man. Thirty-seven translations are quite enough to be called a life-work when they are all, as in this instance, translations of plays — and it is not surprising to find that their author never found time for original work. His seems to have been a conventional, well-ordered life, very different from the exciting careers of violent contrasts that fell to the lot of most men of letters of that day. Indeed, the free lances of that period spare no jokes at him because on completing his education he went into a counting house where he was sure of making a living and where he continued contentedly behind a desk all his life. This businesslike

turn of mind they condemned in most unqualified terms as denoting a spirit wholly without fire and a certain "meanness of mind" as one of his critics puts it. There must indeed have been something very exasperating in this quiet prosperous life, with no care for the future, when viewed from the standpoint of the impecunious scribbler and coffee-house haunter of that day.

This distaste for Ozell, though not based on the same grounds, is aroused in the mind of the modern acquaintance of Ozell. A certain degree of respect must be granted to a translator of Racine and Corneille, who in those days of "adaptations" of anything and everything from Shakespeare to a pantomime followed so closely the lines of his original. His are almost the only real translations made in the eighteenth century. This may be partly due to the fact that his translations were never acted, nor apparently did he ever expect them to be. They were literary works, pure and simple, and stand alone among the efforts of his contemporaries. There was on this account much less temptation for him to "heighten the color," as a later translator calls his own dubious process

of alteration. Still, with this granted, his consistent fidelity to his text deserves much praise.

Whatever respect may be due him on this score, however, must be forfeited on another — his shameless theft of Rutter's *Cid* and reprint of it under his own name. The quiet accountant was not so upright as his respectable and conventional life seemed to indicate.

The prominence which was given to Racine by the acting of the plays already mentioned, and particularly the *Distrest Mother*, can be seen by the fact that in 1714 Ozell had already prepared a translation of *Alexandre* and of *Britannicus*, and had formulated his scheme for stealing Rutter's *Cid*. The "English Booksellers Advertisement"[1] contains a very interesting account of how these two plays came to be printed, and gives proof of the prevalent taste for translated tragedy. "We have had of late Years so few new plays published in England especially Tragedies, that . . . a Man who frequents the Playhouse has got 'em all by Heart. My Purpose is therefore to present the World once a month with a couple

[1] A sort of preface to the volume in which *Alexander* and *Britannicus* appeared.

of translated Tragedies stitcht up together. They shall be such as are in greatest favor in France, where 'tis allowed they excel in that sort of Poem.

"The Reception which some of their tragedies have met with upon our stage with little or no Alteration but of Language is my encouragement to get such of 'em put into English as are not yet done."

This is a businesslike plan on the part of the publisher, and he found the proper person for such a scheme in the steady John Ozell, who makes as close and faithful line-for-line, almost word-for-word, translation as his abilities allow.

The first speech of the play reads thus:

> What's this? Whilst Nero does to sleep indulge,
> Must Agrippa his Uprising wait!
> Wandering i' the court, unguarded, unattended,
> Must Cæsar's Mother watch the door of Cæsar.
> Madam, I pray, turn back to your Apartment.[1]

"Whilst Nero does to sleep indulge" is certainly not a very elegant rendering of "*tandis*

[1] Quoi? tandis que Néron s'abondonne au sommeil,
Faut-il que vous veniez attendre son réveil?
Qu'errant dans le palais sans suite et sans escorte
La mère de César veille seule à sa porte?
Madame, retournez dans votre appartement.

que Néron s'abondonne au sommeil," but Ozell has succeeded in restricting himself to the same number of words as Corneille, and this literal method of translation has some things in its favor when adopted by a man like Ozell. For he had no poetic talent, and if he had allowed himself more latitude it is not probable that he would have hit upon a phrase good enough to make up for his expansion. Judging from his character, it does not seem probable that he chose this system out of any consciousness of his limitations; but from whatever motive he used it, it is certainly the best for him. Conscientiousness is the keynote of Ozell's translations, and it constitutes their value, such as it is. In Act I. Scene 3, a speech of Britannicus has all Ozell's qualities and his faults exemplified in small space:

> What do I seek? Ah! Heavens!
> All, all that I in Life held dear is lost.
> Lost here! My Junia, by a frightful band
> Of men in Arms was hither dragged by Night.
> Ah! Think what Dread must seize her tender Soul
> At that new sight! In short, she's taken from me.

---

[1] Ce que je cherche? Ah Dieux!
Tout ce que j'ai perdu, Madame, est en ces lieux.
De mille affreux soldats Junie environnée

"New sight" for *nouveau spectacle* is actually misleading in its literalness, but it is the best he could do at a close rendering; and even the pathos of the commonplace "in short" after the strong feeling of the rest of the passage has a certain justification in the *enfin* of the French. Ozell's worst absurdities have always the slight excuse that they are drawn in some way from the French. He never invents a ridiculous expression of his own, and in all his translations it is to be doubted whether one such phrase as Cibber's "blood that has so often sprung him through the walls," could be found. Even so bad a passage as this (Act II. Scene 3) —

> Heav'n knows, my Lord, the bottom of my Thoughts
> I don't indulge myself to empty Glory
> I know to rate the Greatness of your Presents,[1] —

has its basis in the original.

> S'est vue en ce palais indignement traînée.
> Hélas! de quelle horreur ses timides esprits
> A ce nouveau spectacle auront été surpris?
> Enfin on me l'enlève!
>
> [1] Le ciel connâit, Seigneur, le fond de ma pensée.
> Je ne me flatte point d'une gloire insensée;
> Je sais de vos présents mesurer la grandeur.

It is not fair to choose so bad an example of Ozell's verse as the last to show what he could do; for, as a rule, it is entirely inoffensive and must have served the purpose of the practical bookseller very well.

The situation was this. A number of people wished to read French tragedy who could not read French, and Ozell gives them the nearest approach to what they consider the essentials of the style — long declamatory speeches (for he never leaves out a line), unity of time and place, and a certain stilted way of expression that had become associated in their minds with the then fashionable tragedy. Ozell's very fidelity, to whatever absurdities his lack of talent may expose him in practising it, stands him in good stead in many instances. He does not trust his judgment to improve upon the general methods of his author, and rhetorical devices are reflected in his pages to the best of his ability. In Act III. Scene 8, where the action comes to a crisis and the dialogue between Nero and Britannicus passes from the oratorical, lengthy speeches of most of the scenes to a rapid angry exchange of single lines or couplets, Ozell copies as well as he can this change of atmosphere :

Britannicus. I ill know Junia or such Sentiments
Will never win applause from her.
Nero. At least
If I can ne'er attain the art to please her,
I know the Art to punish a rash Rival.
Britannicus. For me whatever Ill Fate has in store
Nothing can shake my soul but Junia's hate.
Nero. Wish it! I say no more—
Britannicus. The Happiness
Of pleasing Her is all my Soul aspires to.[1]

This is not at all bad for an unpretending translator and there are many such passages (Act IV. Scene 3):

To his past Glory still a Slave must Nero
Forever have before his Eyes the Love,
Which Chance in one day gives and snatches from us?
Must I indulge their Wills and cross my own?
Am I their Emperor only to please them![2]

---

[1] *Brit.* Je connais mal Junie ou de tels sentiments
Ne mériteront pas ses applaudissements.
Néron. Du moins si je ne sais le secret de lui plaire
Je sais l'art de punir un rival téméraire.
Brit. Pour moi, quelque péril qui me puisse accabler
Sa seule inimitié peut me faire trembler.
Néron. Souhaitez-la ; c'est tout ce que je puis vous dire.
Brit. Le bonheur de lui plaire est le seul où j'aspire.

[2] Quoi ? toujours enchainé de ma gloire passée,
J'aurai devant les yeux je ne sais quel amour
Que le hasard nous donne et nous ôte en un jour ?
Soumis à tous leur vœux, à mes désirs contraire,
Suis-je leur empereur seulement pour leur plaire ?

This is not only more energetic, but much clearer than a translation of the same passage made by a litterateur of much greater pretensions than Ozell a hundred years later — Sir Brook Boothby, who attempted to add a literary tone of his own to his work, making it smoother and more rhetorical than Ozell's bald translation, but losing by that very effort a certain primitive strength that his predecessor gained by his homely fidelity (Act V. Scene 1):

Britannicus. Amazing Goodness! Nero, filled with splendour
Thinks to reduce you with his Grandeur's Witchcraft.
Yet here, where I am shunn'd and he ador'd
My Misr'y you prefer to Nero's pomp.
Heavens! 'Tis too much! In the same Day and Place
To scorn his Sceptre and to weep for me! [1]

It is not too much to call a man who could write these lines competent, even while denying him any claim to talent.

It is scarcely necessary to speak of the com-

[1] Quoi? Madame, en un jour où plein de sa grandeur,
Néron croit éblouir vos yeux de sa splendeur,
Dans des lieux où chacun me fuit et le révère
Aux pompes de sa cour préférer ma misère!
Quoi? dans ce même jour et dans ces mêmes lieux
Refuser un empire et pleurer à mes yeux!

panion translation to this, the one which was "stitched up together" with it — *Alexander the Great*. The same characteristics are to be found in it as in the *Britannicus*, and whatever may have been the influence of one must have been that of the other as they were issued together. What that influence or career was, is a little difficult to determine. The date, 1715, is before the days of regular book reviews in the press of the day, and there are almost no means of discovering how these two were received by a world which "the Bookseller" apparently thought was so very eager to obtain them.

In the same year with these two tragedies appeared the *Cid, translated from the French of Pierre Corneille by J. Ozell.* This has the curious eminence of being at the same time one of the most impudent of literary cheats and one of the most successful. To this day, in all biographies (the *Dictionary of National Biography* included), historical works on the drama, and literary histories of the eighteenth century, Ozell receives credit for this work. At least a careful search fails to show any proof that he was detected. Dr. Mulert[1] alone seems to have

[1] Pierre Corneille auf der Englischen Bühne.

noticed a plagiary almost unique in its boldness; for this translation is nothing more or less than a reprint of the *Cid* of good old Rutter of the time of Charles I. To print in parallel columns selections from Ozell and Rutter or to give first a line from one and then from the other for comparison, would be a waste of energy; for the two texts are identical. It seems really extraordinary that none of the critics of the day, so keen at searching out weaknesses in even the most popular authors and so united in their dislike of Ozell, should have discovered this fraud. For almost two hundred years the respectable accountant has imposed on the world, and that in a way so open and obvious as to make his success amazing. As far as his contemporaries go, there seems no reasonable explanation of their blindness. Ozell's source was not a work which had lain forgotten for centuries in a corner of a library. It was a play which had been performed as late as 1662 at one of the leading theatres in London; so that men of sixty-five, who read Ozell's work, were old enough to have seen the original acted in their youth. And as to the dramatic historians since that time, this oversight of

Ozell's theft is quite as extraordinary. Rutter's translation is a reasonably well-known one, and a volume not particularly rare. Ozell's reprint also is by no means hard to procure, and yet for two centuries no one thought to put the two together.

XIII. IPHIGÉNIE

THE plagiarist Ozell went unmolested on his way, but an innocent imitator who wrote in the same year found himself set upon most fiercely by the irascible Boyer.

Charles Johnson, the author of *The Victim* (*Iphigénie*), a tragedy produced in 1714, seems to have been an amiable character, and a man who lived the most tranquil and prosperous of literary lives. He was a friend of the manager of Drury Lane, the noted Mr. Wilks; and Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) says that it was through this connection that he had his plays presented on the stage without any difficulty. The partiality of Wilks for Johnson was bitterly resented by Boyer, who had been forced to make his own way unaided. The Frenchman regarded Johnson's choice of *Iphigénie*, which he himself had already translated, as an insult, and his ill-humor was not improved by the fact that Johnson's version was successfully produced and met with favor at the hands

of the public. He insisted that Johnson stole his translation of 1700, and was successfully concealing this fact. He published at once a second edition of his own *Iphigenia in Aulis*, with an indignant preface giving an account of what he considered an attack on his honor. "My Tragedy, having long lain dormant, was lately revived in the most Irregular Manner that was ever known or practised either on Parnassus by Poets, or on the Stage by Actors. The town has already done Mr. Boyer justice by discovering the Imposition, and by finding out that the *Victim* was no other than *Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis*. . . . But the manner in which his Performance and Himself have been abused is so flagrant and injurious that he designs in a few days to publish a short Dissertation on the Present Management of the Stage, addressed to My Lord Chamberlain, wherein he shall set forth in a true light the pernicious Consequences of such unfair Practices, both of Writers and Players; and in particular, inquire into the reason *Why* Mr. Wilks declined to revive this very tragedy for the entertainment of the Duke D'Aumont, who, by his Secretary, M. l'Abbé Nadal, had intimated

to Mr. Boyer his Desire to see it represented; which Mr. Boyer signified to Mr. Wilks." There is a whole story to be read between the lines here which explains why, later on in the preface, Boyer is so savage against the quality of Johnson's verse; which certainly is nothing extraordinary, but does not deserve the cuts which the disappointed Frenchman showers on it. The relation between the two translators was the same as that between the persons of honor, Mrs. Philips and Cotton, of Restoration days. Johnson had simply taken the same play as Boyer, and translated it almost as well, in his own way. There are occasional reminiscences of the earlier work to be found in Johnson's *Victim;* but it would be surprising if there were not, under the circumstances, and they prove no direct imitation. Johnson did use the same sort of ending as Boyer, it must be confessed, with the same processions of priests and soldiers, and it is probable that the idea was partly suggested by Boyer's unfortunate ingenuity in this direction; but even here there is no plagiarism in the real sense of the word; no speeches are lifted bodily. Moreover, Johnson introduces a new character

in the *Dramatis Personæ*, Menelaus, and he does not have Diana actually appear in the last act.

Lanson in speaking of Voltaire's hostility to English influence on the French stage lets fall an interesting remark: "Il se moquait de la malencontreuse idée que la Comédie eut un jour de mettre en action le dénouement d'*Iphigénie*." It would be interesting to investigate this and discover if either of these two English versions had any influence in bringing about so radical a departure from the traditions of the Théâtre Français.[1]

The situation in England was probably this. There was a demand for French tragedy which Wilks, as shrewd stage-manager, was bound to supply. *Iphigénie* seemed deserving of more success than it had obtained in Boyer's version fifteen years before, and it seemed a good opportunity to throw a chance for profit in the path of his friend Charles Johnson, professional translator.

The tragedy is translated with reasonable closeness, though with some heightening of effects and a little doctoring of rôles to make them suit the actors who were to play them.

[1] *Histoire de la Littérature française*, p. 641.

The cast at Drury Lane was better than the one which had produced Boyer's *Achilles*, as Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Oldfield took the two principal parts. There are a few changes, but none of any importance. The versification is smooth though not free from Gallicisms. It is altogether a very uninteresting work, although it had more success than Boyer's attempt. It was played to good houses at its first representation and had several revivals afterwards.

The difference between them seems to be that Johnson is smoother but much less vigorous than Boyer. They render in quite different ways almost every strong expression of feeling in the original (Act II. Scene 7):

Achille. Quelle entreprise ici pourroit être formée?
Suis-je sans le savoir la fable de l'armée?
Entrons. C'est un secret qu'il leur faut arracher!

(Johnson.) I'll know this secret; instantly I'll know it
I'll force it from 'em. My distracted Soul
Burns in suspense between my Love and Glory.

(Boyer.) What can their Counsels mean? Am I abus'd
And made a tale to entertain the Army?
I'll in — And wrench this secret from their souls.

This passage illustrates very well the difference between the methods of the two translators. Boyer is still the conscientious seventeenth-century worker who really aims to reproduce the details of his original as well as the plot. Johnson is the type of the later translator who finds it easier to fill out a line with some bombastic invention of his own than to seek to reproduce the French in details whose rendering does not at once occur to him. Platitudinous padding like "My distracted Soul, burns in suspense between my love and glory" is a characteristic mark of the careless eighteenth-century translators. And that they were justified, as far as material success is concerned, in doing this sort of hit-or-miss work is shown by the fact that Johnson's *Victim* succeeded and Boyer's *Achilles* failed.

The quarrel between these two rivals was still being carried on in the next year, 1715, while the indefatigable Ozell was bringing out another of his faithful, uninspired book translations; choosing a comedy, *Les Plaideurs*, which he published with the title of the *Litigants*. For the first time this patient plodder appears to doubt his ability to reproduce what-

ever he wishes. The light and tripping verse of the French comedy seems to daunt him, and he writes his translation in prose. As a consequence, he does much better work than in most of his translations. There are no features to be remarked upon, as he simply makes a faithful, almost a literal, translation with no change of any kind; but he has preserved much better than usual the humor of the original, which is really astonishingly vivid in the reproduction.

It is a much more satisfactory production than any of his tragedies, and the fact that it is in prose seems to help it. It would appear that humor is a growth of sturdier nature than tragic elevation, and better able to endure the rough handling of this unskilful replanter. It reads very well, and the gay good humor of the irony exhales from the English as well as from the French and Greek plays.

In 1715 was also published the first of the long list of Translations from Racine's two tragedies drawn from the Old Testament. Mr. Thomas Brereton, of Brazenose College, Oxford, wrote a translation of *Esther*, apparently the first which had been made in English.

In studying Brereton's life one is again confronted with the influence of French refugees. Indeed, persecutions of various kinds seem to have been a great factor in the knowledge of each other which France and England gained at this time. In the middle of the seventeenth century there was a rush of Royalist refugees to France, and later on in the same century, and during the first part of the eighteenth, there was a current of French Huguenots coming to England. Both of these movements seem to have helped on the desire for translation of French tragedy. Mr. Brereton's education before he went to Oxford was received in a boarding school in Chester kept by a Mr. Dennis, a French refugee. As the greater part of his literary work consists of translations from the French, it can easily be imagined that he was deeply influenced by this early acquaintance with the French language.

Brereton's life is a very different one from the tranquil, prosperous careers of Ozell and Johnson. Stormy and uncertain, with a tragic ending, his history is more characteristic of the literary people of his time. He inherited a

considerable fortune, but very soon wasted it all, and became so poor that his family was obliged to return to his wife's home in Wales. The year after this, having taken to political writings after all other means of gaining a livelihood had failed, he was drowned while attempting to escape prosecution for a libellous attack on a political enemy.

His translation of *Esther* seems to have been the first of his not numerous literary productions which was published with his consent. It has a certain importance, more than is deserved by its own merits, due to the fact that it is the first English translation of a play which must have appealed strongly to English tastes. This is certainly the most important of Brereton's works, though Jacob (*Poetical Register*), writing about the time of his death, says, "This author has also begun a Translation of the other sacred Tragedy of Racine call'd *Athaliah*." His tragic death put an end to this plan.

All the biographers of Brereton mention as second among his works, *Sir John Oldcastle, founded on the Polyeucte of Corneille*, published in 1717, but a faithful search fails to

reveal any trace of this work's ever having seen the light. Moreover, the remarks of the various cataloguers and biographers about this play seem upon inspection to be copied one from the other. Not one of them speaks as though he had actually seen the work, and although *Esther*, *A Day's Journey*, and other of his efforts are described accurately and evidently from a first-hand knowledge, no direct information is given about *Sir John Oldcastle* beyond the fact that it was supposed to be drawn from Corneille, and was printed in 1717. The British Museum does not possess it, nor any of the other great libraries of England — at least as far as the writer has been able to determine. Further than this, the lists of books printed at this time, publishers' catalogues and the like, have no record of it. It is a plausible theory that it was actually written and prepared for publication, that a publisher accepted it and announced that it was about to appear but for some reason it was never actually put in book form, and that the early biographers, noting the announcement, took for granted that the book had appeared.

It is rather a pity that Brereton's *Sir John*

Oldcastle cannot be found and that his *Athaliah* was never finished, for they would have formed a trilogy of French religious plays in English, the first of their kind, and all done by the same author. It is only for the sake of completeness, however, that one wishes for the other two, as the slightness of *Esther's* literary value does not fill the reader with any very keen regret at their loss for their own sake.

Brereton begins his work by a very long argumentative Dedication to the Lord Archbishop of York, containing, besides the usual fulsome compliments to his patron, an arraignment of the English stage for continually presenting "The abominations of the Pagan World," a defence of the stage against attacks on its immorality, a hint that his work would be suitable for use at Court ("The Maids of the Retinue of Our Queen might emulate the Virgins of Saint Cyr"), and a vigorously expressed hope that "those chearfully virtuous Families which are sometimes pleased to so recreate themselves will not be apt to pronounce the Hours I have spent on this Essay to be wholly in vain." In short, it is *Esther* presented as a Sunday-school book, and the level of

skill displayed in the translation justifies his own classification of it. He has the merit, however, of following his original with considerable accuracy. A soliloquy by Mordecai and a superfluous scene in the first act are the only changes, except a curiously significant one in Act V. Scene 7, when a speech oddly out of character by Esther is inserted. As Haman is dragged off by the guards, Esther's consistent, Old Testament, hard silence toward her conquered enemy was evidently regarded as vindictive by the sentimental eighteenth-century translator who was preparing a work for "chearfully virtuous English Families," for he makes Esther say,

> In this warm Mood I nothing cou'd obtain,
> And all the Mercy I design'd is vain.

The translation is in verse throughout, and very bad rhyme much of it is. Inversions are frequent and forced (Act II. Scene 1):

> Doubtless, my Lord, you not my Trust conceive,
> None can surprize us here without my leave.
> * * * * * * *
> Strait I attended — Wild was his discourse,
> He plain'd some danger that his life would force.
> * * * * * * *

Fierce Mordecai not bowed — what needed more
To Haman he not kneeled as others do.

Of his choruses the less said the better. He apologizes for them himself, saying they "were fitted to the French music on which account the Verses could rarely be reduced to the Measure of any of the common English Stanzas." With this self-arrogated license, he allows himself all sorts of irregularities:

This God so high — this jealous God!
Ye Nations, tremble at His Name!
Is he alone whose awful Nod
Commands the universal Frame;
Nor hope so for his People to subdue
But he can yet confound your Gods and You![1]

This is below even the average hymn level of sense and sound.

The first impulse upon reading this translation is to throw it one side as rubbish and to rejoice that the other two of the series are lost.

[1] Ce Dieu jaloux — ce Dieu victorieux,
Frémissez, peuples de la terre,
Ce Dieu jaloux — ce Dieu victorieux,
Est le seul qui commande aux cieux;
Ni les éclairs ni le tonnerre
N'obéissent point à vos dieux.

But that it found a public not insensible to its attractions (whatever they are) is shown in quite elaborate notices of the author which the *Poetical Register* and other biographical works of the time insert, almost without exception; and in the fact that a second edition was issued four years later. On those who did not know his great original, Brereton must have made some sort of a favorable impression to account for this amount of success.

XIV. MISCELLANEOUS TRANSLATIONS

The next translation, presented in 1717 by the mild and pacific Mr. Johnson (author of the *Victim*, which was so attacked by Boyer in 1714), was again the centre of a lively literary skirmish. A short time before the appearance of *The Sultaness*, as Johnson's adaptation of *Bajazet* was called, a comedy named *Three Hours after Marriage* was played with little success. Pope was one of the authors of this piece, although his name did not appear in the matter, and it is the popular theory that his dislike of actors dates from the cool reception of this comedy.

Johnson was injudicious enough to insert in the prologue to his new tragedy, *The Sultaness*, a hit at the three authors of the unsuccessful *Three Hours after Marriage*, which Pope never forgave and which immortalized Johnson by securing for him a place in the Dunciad. The whole prologue is singularly ungracious and tactless, and will perhaps be interesting on account of the stir made about it. After about

eighteen lines of the usual hackneyed prologue verse:

> Our honest Author frankly bade me say
> 'Tis to the great Racine he owes his Play.
> When Rome in Arms had gained immortal Fame
> And proudly triumphed o'er the Grecian name,
> Her Poets copied what Athenians writ,
> And boasted in the Spoils of foreign wit.
> Why then should Britons, who so oft have broke
> The Pride of Gaul, and bow'd her to the Yoke,
> Be blamed if they enrich their native tongue
> With what the Gallick Muse has greatly sung.
> At least 'tis hoped he'll meet a kinder Fate
> Who strives some standard Author to translate,
> Than they who give you, without once repenting,
> Long laboured Nonsense of their own inventing.
> Such Wags have been who boldly did adventure
> To club a Farce by Tripartite Indenture.
> But, let 'em share the Dividend of Praise
> And wear their own Fool's Cap instead of Bays.

This cut at the not too popular Mr. Pope was received with enthusiasm and was chosen for the motto of *The Confederates*, an elaborate parody of *Three Hours after Marriage*.

The Sultaness, far more than most Anglicizings of French tragedy in the eighteenth century, is really a translation and not an adaptation, and is by no means a bad one. Johnson had had much practice in writing dramatic blank verse

in translations from the French, and this shows itself in a production agreeably free from Gallicisms and absurdities of style. The *Dramatis Personæ* are the same as in the original and printed in the same order. It is interesting to note that as early as this *Zaïre* is incorrectly rendered *Zara*, a fault that was to become very prominent in the later translations of Voltaire. The disposition of the scenes is exactly the same, and the tragic ending is for once allowed to stand as it was designed by the author, without bringing to life the defunct. Johnson shows more conscience and more ability in this work than in almost any other.

Baker and Genest each has a bad word for it, however, and report with surprise that it was by no means a failure. Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) says, "*The Sultaness* is little more than a translation of the *Bajazet* of Racine, a Piece which of itself is esteemed the very worst of that author's writings; and as Mr. Johnson's talent seem'd to consist more in Comedy than in Tragedy, it is not to be wondered at if this Play thus served up at second Hand by so indifferent cook should form rather an insipid and distasteful Dish; yet it was per-

formed at Drury Lane with no bad success." Genest has his usual laconic fling at French tragedy. "It is a dull play," he says, and finds less interest in the consideration of the play itself than in the fact that it was the first drama in English to be printed in octavo.

On the whole it seems to deserve a more favorable judgment than is usually given. It is quite free from strained inversions, the besetting sin of mediocre translators, and is smooth and intelligible. It is true it is lacking somewhat in fire and spirit, both qualities rather essential in reproducing the portrait of a character like Roxane, but its lucidity and workmanlike technique make it very pleasant reading after work like Brereton's, or like the translation next to be considered. A good example of Johnson's style follows (Act II. Scene 1):

Bajazet. How Madam!
Roxana. Wherefore do you start, my Lord?
Is there a bar between us and our Joys?
Bajazet. You know our Empire jealous of its Pow'r.
Yet let me not repeat the ungrateful Law.
Roxana. I know when barb'rous Bajazet dethroned
Young Ibrahim; the captive Emperor
Beheld his Spouse chained to the Victor's Car
And drag'd through Asia to adorn his Triumph.

Bajazet. Madam the Choice is easie; Either raise
Your Prisoner — and conduct him to the Throne
Or (I await the Word) receive your Victim.
Roxana. Enough, 'tis done! You shall be satisfied!
A Guard there![1]

It is probable that Boyer could have done better than this and that he would have avoided the many entirely unnecessary departures from the French. But with all its faults this is on the whole a very fair rendition, and deserves much praise for its fidelity to the construction of the French play.

The next translation is one of *La Thébaïde*, written by a Miss J. Robe and published in 1723 with the title *The Fatal Legacy.* The dedication shows that the disfavor which was to fall upon later translations was already

[1] *Bajazet.* O ciel! que ne puis-je parler?
Roxane. Quoi donc? que dites-vous? et que viens-je d'entendre?
Vous avez des secrets que je ne puis apprendre!
Quoi! de vos sentiments je ne puis m'éclaircir?
Bajazet. Madame, encore un coup, c'est à vous de choisir;
Daignez m'ouvrir au trône un chemin légitime;
Ou bien, me voila prêt, prenez votre victime.
Roxane. Ah! c'en est trop enfin, tu seras satisfait.
Holà! gardes, qu'on vienne.

casting its shadow before. The publisher says, speaking for the authoress who was apparently too timid to speak for herself, "This tragedy was writ by a young Lady and entrusted to my management. I introduced it into the Playhouse for her Interest and take the freedom of making choice of you as a Patron for her Reputation. Whatever cold Encouragement it met with upon the Stage I am induced, from the Opinion of several good Judges who perused it before it came there, to believe it might very reasonably be attributed to the Season of the Year which was a little too far advanced to afford much Success to any Entertainment of this kind. It may probably, the next winter, when the Manager of the Theatre has agreed to let it try its fortune again, appear to a greater Advantage. The four first acts are taken chiefly from Racine, but the Last is, excepting a few lines, entirely new."

In spite of the hope expressed here the play seems never to have seen the footlights after its first unfortunate experience. It also never reached the honor of a second edition. From all indications it was a very great fail-

ure; but, such is the levelling power of two centuries, it seems no worse to the modern reader than many other such productions which nevertheless enjoyed a moderate success. There are perhaps more Gallicisms and more pronounced ones in the style than were common, as in Act IV. Scene 3, where a very noticeable one is encountered in the translation of the line, "*L'injustice me plaît, pourvu que je t'en chasse*," which is rendered "Injustice pleases if I but you chase." This is indeed impressively bad, but no worse than passages which might be chosen from other plays which enjoyed a little more favor. To the indifferent and disinterested modern reader there seems no reason why Cibber's *Ximena* should have succeeded while Miss Robe's *Fatal Legacy* failed. It is not in rhyme, for one thing, which removes a fruitful source of absurdity to the unskilful translator. A passage like this from the last scene in the first act:

> And oh! ye Gods if an unspotted flame
> Meets with regards above, restore, restore
> My Life, my Soul, my Phocias to my Love[1] —

[1] Et si tu prends pitié d'une flamme innocente
O ciel, en ramenant Hémon à son amante

is certainly not inspired, but even "unspotted Flame" is no worse than some of Cibber's idiosyncrasies or Brereton's clumsy paraphrases. Miss Robe follows the fashion introduced by Smith and continued by Cibber in altering the last scene by bringing in *Phocias* alive, though Racine had killed him. *La Thébaïde* was too sad for Englishmen. The English adapters of French tragedy seem to have been genuinely convinced of the success of this naïve method of eating their tragic cake and keeping it too; for they kill off just as many characters as do the French, but make a happy ending by simply bringing them again upon the stage. Miss Robe's contention that the last act is not copied from *La Thébaïde* is not founded on fact, for it follows Racine quite as closely as the rest wherever her change of plot does not make it impossible. She makes no attempt to translate accurately, and most of the work is vague paraphrase.

The *Fatal Legacy* was presented to the public on April 23, 1723, at Lincoln's Inn Fields, four months after a successful revival of the *Phœdra*

> Ramène-le fidèle ; et permets, en ce jour
> Qu'en retrouvant l'amant je retrouve l'amour.

of Edmund Smith, at the same theatre. It was played only once, apparently, and then disappeared. The inflated and bombastic style is highly characteristic of dramatic writings of the period, but it is not without the merit of a certain academic correctness which makes it always intelligible at least (Act II. Scene 3):

> That Love his happy Sister once could boast
> Is lost, translated to another aim.
> He's charmed with Blood — the scarlet object takes;
> And fiery Polynices is no more
> Th' affectionate, the soft endearing Brother,
> He eyes us both with a disdaining air.

It is quite evident that this translation of *Les Frères Ennemis* was one of the most obscure, and had neither importance nor reputation in the history of translations. Lowe's bibliography mentions a pamphlet appearing in 1723, "Abstract of the lives of Etiocles and Polynices necessary to be read by the Spectators of the Fatal Legacy. J. Robe." The British Museum does not possess this, but its disappearance is little to be regretted.

In 1725 (two years after the failure of the *Fatal Legacy*) Colley Cibber performed what

is perhaps his most remarkable feat in the way of using other people's materials. Taking Beaumont and Fletcher's *False One*, Corneille's *Pompée*, and one or two ideas of his own, he stirred them all together with such vigor, and so disguised them with his own wonderful versification, that it is an almost impossible task to distinguish the different elements in the dish which he served up to the public at Drury Lane under the title of *Cæsar in Egypt*. As final flavor he refrains from giving any indication that the entire tragedy is not of his own invention. Whether this is disingenuous, as would appear at first, or whether, as late in Colley's life as this, it went without saying that he borrowed his material is hard to decide.

The prologue contains two rather neatly witty lines. Mr. Wilkes, speaking of the great rage for French farce, Harlequin pantomime, and the like, says,

> Far be it from us to question your Delight
> To be at Pleasure wrong is English right.

The general plan and construction of the play is undoubtedly Corneille's, many of the best speeches are literally translated, especially

some of the famous ones between Cornelia and Cæsar; and the description of Pompey's death is taken verbatim from the French:

> When from his ships he saw the spacious Beach
> Covered with gazing crowds and at their front
> Our shining Troops in stately order ranged
> * * * * * *
> Concluding that our grateful King designed
> In Person and with Honours to receive him.
> But when at length he found but one poor Boat
> Sent forth, fill'd only with a chosen guard,
> And those without the King to grace his Welcome,
> His Fate he saw, yet would not seem to see.
> Silent he stood, with Eyes resigned and dauntless,
> Or anxious only for Cornelia's fears.[1]

This is not absolutely literal, but it is as much so as Cibber's avowed translations.

It is curious in this connection to note that a German doctor's dissertation has been written[2]

[1] *Achorée.* Et voyant dans le port preparer nos galères,
Il croyait que le roi touché de ses misères,
Par un beau sentiment d'honneur et de devoir,
Avec toute sa cour le venait recevoir;
Mais voyant que ce prince, ingrat à ses mérites,
N'envoyait qu'un esquif rempli de satellites,
Il soupçonne aussitôt son manquement de foi,
* * * * * *
Et réduit tous les soins d'un si pressant ennui
A ne hasarder pas Cornélie avec lui.

[2] *Das Verhältnis von Cibber's Tragödie* Cæsar in Egypt

which, although tracing the sources of Cibber's work, wholly ignores the large part which *Pompée* plays in the construction of the tragedy, drawing all of the material from Beaumont and Fletcher. As if to make up for this, Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) gives no credit to Beaumont and Fletcher, saying that it is all taken from Corneille. Genest [1] acknowledges that the character of Cornelia is Corneille's, but then proceeds to criticise most severely the very parts which originated with the French.

As this play is not one of Cibber's successes it is scarcely worth mentioning, except for the fact that it is a very interesting symbol of the average attempt of that period to put French tragedy on the English stage. A play of the Elizabethan school is forced into unnatural coalescence with one of the most classical of seventeenth-century French tragedies, and the result is performed before an audience of the early Georgian period — a monstrous effort whose failure is assured from the beginning.

Cibber's adaptation is almost the last of this

zu Fletcher's The False One: Max Stoye, Friedrichs-Universität, Halle, 1897.

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. III. p. 161.

series of translated plays. The group which has just been surveyed and of which the one about to be considered is the last, was the direct result of the success of the *Distrest Mother* — all being attempts to reproduce the popular elements in that play. In the eighteen years following Ambrose Philips's triumph, fourteen translations of classic tragedy had appeared; but between the *Rival Father* of Hatchett played at the Haymarket in 1730 and the next rendition, lies a gap of twenty years without the appearance of a single new translation. The *Distrest Mother* was acted steadily all through this period, and once or twice some of the other translations were revived; but in general the movement started by Philips and the Addison circle died down completely until another great success in 1750 turned attention in that way again.

The play now under consideration — the adaptation from *La Mort d'Achille* of Thomas Corneille, made by the actor Hatchett, and played by his own company, is interesting because it is the last tragedy translated by an actor for his own use. It is indeed one of the last tragedies translated for the stage. The

period of the literary translation pure and simple is almost at hand.

Nothing, however, could be farther from a literary translation than this adaptation of Hatchett's. It is not only put together solely for actual use on the stage, but also largely with a view to furnish good parts to the actor himself and to his favorite actress. The play is cut to pieces and made over in order to make Achilles a more important part than Corneille had conceived it, as the actor-author had chosen that rôle for himself. This is not a matter of conjecture, nor a conclusion drawn from a study of the play, but from a preface of Hatchett himself, where he sets forth with rare naïveté the reason for his changes. Pyrrhus (a part taken by a rival actor) is kept on the stage so constantly by Corneille in the first act "as to become tedious to the audience." "In the third act Corneille is guilty of the same error with the two former acts — Pyrrhus never leaving the stage — which I have rectified as before. In the fifth act of Corneille, Achilles does not appear at all, which I have avoided, he making the second scene of this act proceeding to the temple, not being willing that the Audience should lose

sight of the Hero so long as near an act and a half." Nothing could be a plainer concession to the "star" system.

The fact that this, like all the other similar works of this period, was inspired by the *Distrest Mother* is shown by a passage later: "It may possibly be objected that in the chief characters of the piece I have only imitated Mr. Philips's *Distrest Mother*, but I must desire such Gentlemen to remember that *La Mort d'Achille* by M. Corneille was wrote some time before the *Andromaque* of Racine, tho' I shall not disown that my admiration and the just success of that play encouraged me to attempt this performance." A little farther he suggests airily that Corneille received various embellishments from his own pen, in the way of improved diction, flowers of metaphor, and the like.

His translation is in reality a very poor one. The changes in construction are very ineptly planned, and the versification insignificant, although at times attaining the interest of being really bad (Act I. Scene 1):

> Après avoir forcé sa colère à se rendre
> L'illustre Briseis a droit de tout prétendre.

After such proofs how much his soul is yours
What can't the illustrious Briseis do?

It is not worth while analyzing the changes in the plot, as they are numerous and almost without exception actuated by the same small actor-vanity which is indicated in the preface. The scene interpolated in the fifth act to bring Achilles on the stage is an especially unfortunate change, as it is not only wholly unnecessary but delays the action.

The workmanship is poor throughout and the production deserves no attention. Genest does not fail in his usual severe judgment of a play drawn from the French, but the weight of his displeasure in this case falls on what is left of the plan of the original. "The plot is contemptible to the last degree; mythological stories even when judiciously treated rarely please; but when the principal personage is represented contrary to received notions, they disgust."[1]

Baker (*Biographica Dramatica*) has a rather more tolerant attitude toward the *Rival Father*, and says moderately, "Yet on the whole

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. III. p. 281.

there is some merit in it, and it will not be saying too much to confess that there have been many pieces since its appearance which have not been so deserving of approbation, that have met with good success," — a charitable statement which it is difficult to believe.

XV. THE ROMAN FATHER

The first translated tragedy to appear after Hatchett's *Rival Father* was one performed in 1750, another adaptation from *Horace;* under the title of *The Roman Father.* This was another great success, almost as complete as the *Distrest Mother*, and with almost as great an influence in starting up an interest in Racine and Corneille.

The author, William Whitehead, was at that time a rising young poet of thirty-five, a Cambridge graduate, who although the son of a baker moved in the most aristocratic circles, and who seven years after the production of his *Roman Father* was to become Poet Laureate. Garrick was a friend of his, and it was at Drury Lane under Garrick's management that his tragedy was presented. Success was immediate and continuous. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1750 — the issue following the play — reprinted in full the prologue and epilogue and gave an account of the history

which was the basis of the plot. The *Monthly Review* for the same month gave ten full pages to elaborate criticism and comment. Three pamphlets were published directly, criticising and commending the play — a sure sign of the prominence attained by the tragedy. There is every indication that the performance was considered one of the notable ones of the time. And this was not merely a temporary success. It was played for a very long run at first, and then, as a stock play, it was presented at intervals of rarely more than two years until 1809. This and the *Distrest Mother* are by far the most popular of the English adaptations of Racine and Corneille, and it is a compliment to English taste that they are taken from the masterpieces of their respective authors.

The cast at Drury Lane on the evening of February 24, 1750, was almost as distinguished as that at the same theatre thirty-eight years before, at the première of Ambrose Philips's tragedy. Horatius was played by Garrick, a rôle which was among his most admired creations, and which was commented upon in most eulogistic terms by contemporary critics. The dramatic critic for the *Monthly Review* carried

his admiration for Garrick's acting in this part so far as to attribute the success of the play almost entirely to it. Criticising severely Whitehead's rendering of the famous *Qu'il mourût!* by the more lengthy *He might have died!* he says, "It is true, indeed, the sentiment could not but call forth a thunder of applause when we heard 'He might have dyed!' pronounced with all the energy that the best player of the present or perhaps of any age could give it."

The younger Horatius[1] was played by Barry, and Horatia by Mrs. Pritchard. The performance must have been characterized by all of Garrick's skill, not only as an actor but as a manager.

The translation is singularly faithful to the spirit of its original, inasmuch as the keynote of the whole production in English as in French is fiery patriotism. The prologue and epilogue dwell upon the lesson of devotion to one's country which is inculcated in the play. While neither prologue nor epilogue have any special literary value, they are interesting as

[1] Contrary to the French usage in regard to this tragedy, the title rôle is that of the elder of the two Horaces.

being the rare examples of their kind, written for these severe French masterpieces, without coarseness or vulgarity.

The play is "addressed to the Honourable Thomas Villiers," one of Whitehead's aristocratic patrons. There is an "Advertisement" in which the author explains the relation of his play to Corneille's in the following terms: "The Author of the *Roman Father* thinks it proper to acquaint the public that he never should have thought of writing a play on the following subject had he not read first the celebrated *Horace* of M. Corneille and admired his management of some capital parts of the story. They will accordingly find him tracing his original very closely, with some few alterations in the latter end of the third act and the beginning of the fourth. In the other acts he could only introduce occasional imitations. The difference of his plan and characters would not admit of a strict adherence, and often required a total deviation. He can only add that it was his endeavor to make the Father the principal personage and to show him in every light his peculiar situation and variety of distress would allow of." The changes, as he

indicates, are considerable, the most important being the omission of the family of the Curiace altogether. The list of characters in the *Roman Father* is as follows :

Tullus Hostilius: King of Rome.
Horatius: A Roman Senator.
Publius Horatius: His Son.
Valerius: A young Patrician.
Horatia: Daughter to Horatius.
Valeria: Sister to Valerius.

Sabine and Curiace are omitted, and Valeria takes the rôle of Julie. Horatia is Camille. Otherwise the relations are just as they are in the French original. In the criticisms of the play there are various opinions as to the advisability of thus omitting two of the chief characters, and confining the interest to Rome and to one family. Genest says, " Whitehead has been criticised for omitting this circumstance as being a great exaggeration of the distress ; he has, however, acted judiciously, as the thing is a mere poetical fiction and as the character of Publius Horatius is sufficiently savage as it now stands." [1]

The *Biographica Dramatica*, on the other

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. IV. p. 296.

hand, remarks, "It must be confessed we cannot help wishing he had followed even more closely the plan of that very capital writer in the conduct of the piece, since . . . he has deprived himself of the opportunity of throwing in that variety of incident and contrast of character which Corneille's play is possessed of." The critic of the *Monthly Review* says that Whitehead is indebted to Corneille for every good passage in the play. "The audience, when we saw it acted, never gave one signal of their approbation (except when the masterly manner of the performance deserv'd it), but on passages that were translated from the French writer." After its criticism, the *Biographica Dramatica* adds gravely, "In some respects the play before us has the advantage of the French play, the declamatory parts in the latter being too long and diffuse for giving pleasure in a theatrical representation. There are also more poetical beauties in the language of Mr. Whitehead than in that of Corneille's tragedy, and indeed it may be ranked amongst the best of the dramatic pieces of this somewhat unprolific age." Genest reaches what is for him almost enthusiasm in speaking of a

translation of this kind. He says, "It is a moderate tragedy."

The great success of this play seems to have been that it furnished an extraordinarily good rôle for Garrick and actors of his school. Like *The Rival Father* of Hatchett, it was so twisted from its original plan by this idea that it can scarcely be called a translation at all; it is more a rewriting of the same story as Corneille's.

The great popularity of *The Roman Father* aroused again the enthusiasm of translators, and for the third time a little cycle of English renderings of Corneille and Racine ran its course. This impulse was much feebler than that communicated by Mrs. Philips's success with *Pompey*, or by Ambrose Philips's *Distrest Mother*. With each recurrence the force of the impetus was weaker and ended in more complete stagnation.

Whitehead's adaptation was presented in 1750. Three years later Dr. Young (he of the *Night Thoughts*) drew out of its obscurity a translation of Thomas Corneille's *Persée et Demetrius*, which he had made almost thirty years before, and, encouraged by Whitehead's

success, presented it to Garrick. It had been written before he took orders in 1728 (at the beginning of his friendship with Voltaire), so that it is really one of the translations belonging in the company of the *Distrest Mother;* but the conscientious clergyman thought play-writing — even tragedy writing — was not a suitable occupation for one of his profession, and stowed *The Brothers* away in a dark corner until he was seventy years old, when he decided to produce it for the benefit of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Nothing could be more quaintly amusing, although almost pathetic, than the figure of the venerable and respected Dr. Young plunged at once by this decision into acrid green-room quarrels and into troublesome contact with the widely known George Anne Bellamy, who was certainly the strangest companion and associate possible for the elderly clergyman. There are a number of piquant anecdotes, well known in theatrical gossip, relative to the incorrigible madcap's irreverent attitude toward the author of *The Brothers.* She objected to a line she was to speak — "I will speak to you in thunder!" — as too swelling a metaphor for

a woman to employ. Upon being impressively informed by the dignified author that what she took for roughness was strength, she asked pertly if it would not be stronger if "and lightning" were added. By this and similar impertinent flings she vastly incensed the old Doctor, and her famous fascinating personality has no better proof of its power than the fact that, in spite of these passages at arms, she prevailed upon him to force Garrick to allow her to read the play to the company and to assume the rôle of heroine. This last Garrick did with ill grace, as it was a part he thought particularly suitable to his favorite Mrs. Pritchard. It is not necessary to go into more of the disagreeable incidents which preceded the appearance of the tragedy, and which formed the uncomfortable prelude to what must have been a very disheartening experience for the old clergyman. In the first place, the play was not a success. Garrick kept it running for eight nights, but the audiences were small. Only £400 were cleared for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, whose evangelical name sounds so oddly out of place among the somewhat unsavory incidents connected with

this attempt to benefit it. Dr. Young, hurt at the smallness of this result, added £600 out of his own pocket, so that the Society received £1000 from him.

What must have been a final touch of humiliation to the refined author was the substitution by Garrick of a coarse, indelicate epilogue for the dignified, historical one written by Young himself. Doran says, speaking of the lack of success of *The Brothers*, "Garrick substituted a coarse epilogue which was spoken by the sprightly Kitty Clive who loved to give coarseness all its point, but it could not save the piece!"[1] (This last clause is delicious.)

Dr. Young himself does not seem to be wholly blameless in this episode. It must be considered distinctly disingenuous for the author of the *Night Thoughts* not to make any acknowledgment of the source of his tragedy. His title-page gives no hint of it, and the prologue, in which, on similar occasions, grudging reference is sometimes made to a French source, seems to imply that history was the sole source of the author's plot. This is not an omission of a fact

[1] *See* life of Young, *Young's Complete Works*, edited by John Doran, London, 1854.

that would be self-evident to every one, for at least two magazines of the time (the *Monthly Review* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*) apparently do not know that the play is not original with Dr. Young, and Genest himself says that the addition of the character of Erixène is a good invention of Dr. Young's.[1]

For what the good Doctor actually did — namely, adapt *Persée et Demetrius* — he deserves a great deal of credit. It is one of the best revamped French tragedies of the century. After the halting efforts of the very mediocre men of letters whose translations come before *The Brothers*, it is a satisfaction to find one's self dealing with a versifier of real talent and taste.

Dr. Young does not make a close translation, although he follows the story with commendable fidelity. He uses his original with great freedom and he made a tragedy so far from the French in many instances that it almost deserves the title of an original tragedy, and perhaps is as good a one as Thomas Corneille's. It has some passages of very solid worth, in its own fashion of rhetoric, and it cannot be said of

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. IV. p. 360.

this as of Whitehead's production, that all the good speeches are taken from the French. There are, however, a number of translated passages (Act II. Scene 1):

> Think you he'll wed her? No, the princess' eye
> Makes no such short-lived conquest. He'll refuse,
> And thus effect what I have sought in vain.
> Yes, he'll refuse, and Dymas in his wrath,
> Will list for us and vengeance.[1]

The disposition of scenes is often quite different, and the individual passages are shuffled about in a confusing way, so that it is difficult to know exactly how much or what Dr. Young took literally from Corneille.

It is a very unusual case. A man of about the caliber of the author whom he copies, adapts one of the latter's most ordinary works and produces one of his own which (as nearly as may be accurately decided) has exactly the same

> Seigneur à cet hymen vous croyez qu'il consente ?
> Lui qui pour la Princesse ardemment inflammé
> Prétend n'aimer qu'autant qu'il se connaît aimé ?
> Non, non, je n'en mets point le refus en balance.
> Il saura de Didas rejetter l'alliance
> Et d'un pareil mépris Didas, trop indigné,
> Contre lui par nos soins sera bientôt gagné.

value as the original; which, in turn, is not very great.

The Brothers has a special interest as one of the last translations to be performed. Although it was a very creditable piece of work, well acted, and with a great name back of it, its lack of success shows the decided character of the movement away from classic tragedy. The public would have none of it in spite of these advantages, and treated in like manner the next aspirant for stage honors.

Oddly enough this attempt, following Dr. Young's, is again concerned with a play-writing clergyman and the lively Miss Bellamy. Dr. Philip Francis was an ambitious Irishman, ordained in the Irish branch of the English church, and determined to make his way in London social life. He tried school teaching for a time, and Gibbon was one of his pupils. But this did not succeed, and he turned his attention to adapting plays from the French. In 1752 he turned a French comedy into a tragedy, managed to get it presented at Drury Lane, and was astonished at its complete failure. In 1754 he tried again, taking the *Maximian* of Thomas Corneille and making it over

into a tragedy which he called *Constantine*. This also was a failure, and the second rebuff disheartened Dr. Francis completely. But of this experience came the best fortune of his life — his acquaintance with George Anne Bellamy, kind-hearted as she was capricious, who took pity on the unsuccessful, middle-aged clergyman, and secured for him the position of private chaplain to Lady Caroline Fox; a position where he made powerful friends, and where he was soon so happily prosperous as to think no more of preparing French tragedy for the English stage: a state of mind which occasioned no great loss to the latter.

Constantine is so free an adaptation as scarcely to come under the head of translation at all, but it is by no means so good as Dr. Young's *Brothers*. For one thing, there are various inconsistencies in the action, which are caused by deviating from the plot of the original and by carelessly preserving entire, in the translation, speeches which refer to facts unknown to the English auditor. The style is confused and bombastic, even more than was the fashion, although technically correct enough.

The *Gentleman's Magazine* says that it failed

from lack of action, which is of course not Dr. Francis's fault. The *Monthly Review* attributes its failure to poor acting. Mr. Barry as Constantine was excellent and Miss Bellamy as Fulvia outshone herself, but the rest "were quite unequal to their task." It is intimated that some underhand wire-pulling behind the scenes was responsible for this deplorable state of things, and that the failure would not have been so marked had not Garrick, Mrs. Cibber, and Mossop chosen that time to appear in a new tragedy, *Virginia*, which quite eclipsed *Constantine*. However that may be, *Constantine* was a very great failure, and closed the presentations from Corneille and Racine in anything but a burst of glory.

After Dr. Francis, the next writer to try tragedy was one S. Aspinwall, of whom no more seems to be known than that he wrote and published in 1765 a translation of *Rodogune*, under the same title. While his reproduction of this great tragedy is by no means a masterpiece, his preface to it is unique and deserves reproduction in full. "Having seen the *Distrest Mother* so finely translated and so well received on our stage, tho' Done

almost verbatim from the French of Racine by Mr. Philips, I had a mind to try how *Rodogune* might appear in an English dress from Mons. Corneille. My friends tell me in some parts the translation is stronger than the original. If so, I will impute it merely to our language being more nervous than the French and to the translator's being unconfined by the fetters of Rhyme in which the original is written ; If it should be found to have *equal* spirit with it, I shall be satisfied and so perhaps will the reader. So fine a tragedy I at first thought shou'd be tried at both Theatres ; but whether that, as some say, nothing now goes down but singsong, and that there are more temples open to sound than sense ; or whether (as I was told by some) they were really pre-engaged ; or (as by others) there were too long speeches in it or too much sentiment ; too much talking and too little doing or bustle in it ; or not so much of the latter as is required on the English stage ; I here give it however to the public, and I may say almost gratis. If there be not in it so much show and bustle as some of our English pieces, of guards, trumpets, processions, illu-

minated temples etc., there is the most heighten'd distress throughout; each act rising above another and gradually increasing in distress . . . and if the eyes and ears are not entertained so much with shews and shouts, the heart is everywhere almost continually struck with horror and pity."

This condescending air of the literary amateur is a new note in translations from Racine and Corneille, but it is one which is assumed more or less continually in all the translations made from this time on. The reign of the gentleman of leisure with a fad has come in, and the hard-working, practical actors or managers occupy themselves no more with work of this kind.

Mr. Aspinwall's translation, while not at all a good one, is diverting in the extreme by the curious way in which he puts Corneille's swelling seventeenth-century verse in terms of mincing eighteenth-century sentiment (Act I. Scene 1):

> The nuptial torch shall blaze instead of war.
> Soft bands of love tye up the arm of Mars.[1]

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[1] The translator's complete lack of fidelity is seen by the

The verse is written with smoothness, but is entirely insignificant. The *Monthly Review*[1] devotes two lines to the appearance of this publication, in which the following laconic judgment is passed: "This is a very indifferent translation of a very excellent tragedy. The translator's name, it appears from the preface, is Aspinwall." In spite of the grandiloquent preface, this notice is all that the translation ever deserved.

Eleven years after *Rodogune* appeared there was published by one T. Bell, printer, two translations, *Phedra*, and *Melite*, which are unique from some points of view. It is hard to believe that more absurd examples of book-making were ever produced. They are so bad as to be very entertaining, although it perplexes the reader to conceive any reason why they should have ever been issued.

In the newspaper room of the British Museum there are twelve quarto tomes of material, gath-

fact that the lines which seem most closely connected to this passage are:

Ce grand jour où l'hymen, étouffant la vengeance,
Entre le Parthe et nous remet l'intelligence.

[1] Old series, Vol. XXXIII. p. 85, July, 1765.

ered for a history of the English stage, the story of whose origin may possibly furnish a clew to this mystery. On the first page of the first of these mighty volumes the patient collector explains the beginning of his enterprise. A publisher, having picked up at auction some plates for engravings relative to the stage, had asked him to prepare a hastily written history of the English stage to go around the engravings.

No one can read this account without thinking at once of the wonderful frontispiece of this edition of *Phedra*, which is as unintelligible as the text, and feeling sure that the translation was written around it. The only difference in the two cases is that apparently T. Bell desired that his matter supplementary to the illustration should be prepared over night, and gave it to the printer's devil to do. Nothing else will explain such lines as these (Act I. Scene 3):

Phædra. Stop, dear Œnone. My strength forsakes me,
My eyes grow dim, and my trembling knees totter under
Their wretched burden, Alas!

Œnone. All Powerful Gods! Let our tears appease you!

Phædra. How these vain and gaudy ornaments encumber me;
They may adorn the external part, but cannot compose

The afflicted mind! All, all disturb and conspires to
wound your unhappy queen.

Later on the grammar gives way entirely,

Thrice has the shades of night spread o'er the heavens
Without thy wonted rest, and thrice the sun has
Took his diurnal course, yet thou takest no
Nutriment to preserve your precious life.

Every effort to discover more about these extraordinary productions has proved fruitless. Apparently no reference to them exists in any of the contemporary periodicals. Even the *London Review*, edited by that malicious Kenrick to whom Macaulay applied the ugly name, loses this opportunity for a scathing review. They seem to have passed absolutely unnoticed, which was certainly a most fortunate thing for their publisher.

XVI. ESTHER AND ATHALIE

As might be expected, the life of *Athalie* and *Esther* in English was quite different from that of other French tragedies. It was surrounded by an atmosphere other than that of the dramas translated for the stage. From the beginning there is a distinctly clerical air about the translators of *Athalie*, even when they are not clergymen. It is the religious element in Racine's great masterpiece which attracts them.

This is true of the first[1] of the line as well as of his successors. In 1722 there was published in London, *Athaliah, A tragedy translated from the French of Monsieur Racine by Mr. William Duncombe.* In the dedication the author says

[1] Strictly speaking this was not the first, as several years earlier than this the Countess of Winchilsea had prepared a translation of part of the fifth scene in the second act — the famous dream of Athalie. This was published with her other poems in 1713. The author is the same who was so cruelly satirized by Pope in the comedy *Three Hours after Marriage*, mentioned on page 212.

that he had completed the translation eight years before he published it, which would make it the work of quite a young man — twenty-four or five. He died in 1769, and the *Gentleman's Magazine* for the same year (page 333) has this notice: "Died, Wm. Duncombe, Esq., in the eightieth year of his age, universally known, respected, and admired for his amiable temper and many ingenious publications." It is already shown that *Athaliah* was one of the earliest of these "ingenious publications," although before that he had translated parts of Horace. His best-known work is a translation and adaptation of Voltaire's *Brutus*.

The English dress which he gives to *Athalie* is carefully and intelligently wrought, with occasional touches which suggest the original. It deserves no great commendation as a work of art, but as a faithful, close, and intelligible rendering it is excellent. His translation of the famous dream of Athalie is a good example of the conscientious fidelity of Duncombe (Act II. Scene 5):

> 'Twas in the dead of Night when Horror reigns
> My Mother Jezebel appeared before me,
> Richly adorned, as on the day she died.

Her sorrows had not damped her noble Pride.
She even still retained that borrowed Lustre
Which she was wont to spread upon her cheeks
To make Amends for the Decays of Time.
"Tremble, said she, O Daughter worthy of me,
The Hebrews' cruel God prevails against thee,
I grieve that into his tremendous Hands,
My Daughter, thou must fall." As she concluded
These words so full of Horror, her Shadow seemed
Forward to bend and bow upon my Bed;
I stretched out hastily my Arms to meet her,
But Nothing caught beside a dreadful Heap
Of Bones, and Mangled Flesh, bedaubed with Mire,
Garments all dyed with Blood and shattered Limbs
Which greedy Dogs did eagerly contend for.[1]

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[1] C'était pendant l'horreur d'une profonde nuit.
Ma mère Jézabel devant moi s'est montrée,
Comme au jour de sa mort pompeusement parée,
Ses malheurs n'avaient point abattu sa fierté;
Même elle avait encor cet éclat emprunté
Dont elle eut soin de peindre et d'orner son visage,
Pour réparer des ans l'irréparable outrage;
"Tremble, m'a-t-elle dit, fille digne de moi;
"Le cruel Dieu des Juifs l'emporte aussi sur toi.
"Je te plains de tomber dans ses mains redoutables,
"Ma fille." En achevant ces mots épouvantables,
Son ombre vers mon lit a paru se baisser;
Et moi je lui tendais les mains pour l'embrasser,
Mais je n'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible mélange
D'os et de chairs meurtris, et trainés dans la fange,
Des lambeaux pleins de sang, et des membres affreux
Que des chiens dévorants se disputaient entre eux.

It is difficult to form an independent judgment of the intrinsic merit of Duncombe's work, because of the wonder of the reader at the scrupulous accuracy of a rendering like this.

With the beginning of the nineteenth century there appear a number of translations of the two religious dramas of Racine, which can be advantageously treated in a group, without going into detail. In 1803 an Edinburgh firm printed *The Sacred Dramas of Esther and Athalie*. The name of the translator is not given, but whoever he was he was a much better literary craftsman than Brereton, for his *Esther* far surpasses that of the eighteenth-century translator. It is close and faithful, and yet reasonably smooth. By this time, however, modern ideas had begun to come in, and faithfulness is not a quality to be so much remarked upon, as denoting an unusual quality in the aim of the author. The *Athalie*, published with this, is also a creditable piece of work and a very fair if by no means powerful rendering of the original.

In 1815, again in Edinburgh, there appeared another translation of *Athalie* done by John Sheppard, who seems to have been a nineteenth-

century Duncombe. He was a rigid Baptist, devoting his time (as the *Dictionary of National Biography* puts it) to "religious authorship, lay preaching, and foreign travel." His *Thoughts Preparatory to Private Devotion* was a very popular book, going through five editions in five years. The very title of such a book shows what element in *Athalie* was the one inducing him to translate it.

In his preface he says that he was not aware of a previous translation of *Athalie* in English until he had almost completed his own. Then a friend showed him Duncombe's, of which he speaks in the following terms: "This piece (although it had reached a third edition in 1740) did not appear at all to supersede the present attempt. I may venture to pronounce it a servile rendering of the original with very disputable claims in any instance to the title of English poetry." After this it is to be expected that he should write a much poorer translation of Duncombe, which indeed he does. The *Monthly Review* (Vol. LXXX. p. 319), in reviewing the work, says, "The Spirit of Racine's Composition has been more successfully imitated than its harmony." It is a little

difficult to conceive *Athalie* without its harmony, so that it must be allowed that it is a rather faulty copy which John Sheppard presented to the religious world of his day.

In 1822 there appeared a translation of *Athalie*, chiefly interesting for its delicious preface, which is worth quoting. The title-page gives no idea as to the character of the author beyond the colorless, "Translated from the French of J. Racine with Notes by J. C. Knight." But with the first lines of the preface he stands revealed with the utmost clearness. "It will be necessarily expected that a youth of seventeen should state his motives for thus obtruding himself upon the Public. Being greatly desirous to enter the Church, he has undertaken the translation of Racine's *Athaliah* in order to defray a part of the expenses of an education . . . it is this motive *alone* which has actuated him to translate this tragedy; for rather, far rather, would he devote his youth to the acquirement of that knowledge which will enable him to discharge the duties of a clergyman with propriety, and qualify him for further usefulness. The writer has alluded to his age, not with the desire of exalting this publication

in the opinion of its reader, but with a view of obtaining for all its imperfections and improprieties those allowances which he hopes will be granted to his youth and his motives." A little further on he speaks of his pious intention to devote no time to the attempt to reproduce the mere beauties of the tragedy, but to emphasizing the points of Jewish history involved.

This preface has been reproduced at such length because it seems to sum up, although in an exaggerated way, the feeling of the worthy translators of the nineteenth century, who bestowed their labors upon *Athalie*. About this particular translation there is little to be said, except that it is not quite so bad as one would naturally think it, from this introduction.

From this time on there are many translations of *Athalie*, but almost without exception the work of clergymen or school-teachers with more zeal than literary ability. It seems improbable that any of these works, except perhaps Duncombe's, ever had any name or influence, and it is quite certain that none of them ever came within hailing distance of the theatre. Consequently they have little significance as far as the real life of Racine in England is concerned.

XVII. THE LAST OF THE MOVEMENT

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the history of the translations of Racine and Corneille is uneventful. The movement is at an end. The attempt of the Restoration translators to establish French tragedy in English literature had failed, and the attempt of the early eighteenth-century dramatist to put it on the English stage had fared no better.

In addition to the obvious reasons for this failure, such as the difference in taste between the two nations and the fact that translations rarely, under any conditions, become a real part of a national literature, there is a new reason which, in itself, would have been sufficient to put an end to the movement. That is the decline of the art of reciting verses on the stage. Garrick's wonderful talent as a pantomimist, and the school of actors who followed him, had put out of fashion the measured and harmonious reading of noble verses. As the en-

tire strength of the French classic tragedy lay in just such verses and in the opportunity they gave for fine declamation, they became completely foreign to the sympathies of even the cultured people who had admired them before. This change in dramatic ideals was by no means confined to England, as it was already recognized by many of the leading French actors and actresses of the later eighteenth century; but it was a change naturally more in accord with English taste than with French, and as a consequence was carried out to its fullest extent more rapidly in British theatres. It may seem a strange statement that the generation which heard John Kemble's stately declamation and that of his school, should have drifted away from an admiration for dramatic verse. But it must be remembered that a statement of this kind is always relative. In these days of colloquial, free-and-easy delivery of Shakespearian verse, the records of Kemble's measured reading sound classic. But proofs are not wanting that the older and more conservative people at the beginning of the nineteenth century looked upon the school of actors of that time as lacking in dignity. Some

remarks from the preface to a translation from the French, written by a man of taste and discrimination, show clearly this tendency (Sir Brooke Boothby, page 272).

The iron rule of the hemistich was broken, verses were no longer recited by rule but according to the sense — carrying the voice over the cæsura if the sense demanded it. This again is a relative statement, and must be taken as such. The actors of that time undoubtedly made it appear that they were reciting poetry and not prose, which is more than can be said of present-day Thespians; but in comparison with the Bettertons, Booths, and Mrs. Bracegirdles of an earlier period they probably sounded very conversational.

From 1776 on there are no famous names among the translators, and very few names of any kind. The virtuous Hannah Brand takes time from her school-teaching in 1798 to tincture Corneille's *Don Sanche D'Arragon* with British sentimentality, and in 1802 an anonymous translator produces a fair rendering of the *Cid*. These two works represent all that was done with the elder Corneille.

In 1813 *Britannicus* attracts the attention of

a country gentleman of mildly literary taste, and *Esther* is translated the same year; and there is an end of the appearances of Racine in English — with the very notable exception of *Athalie*.

Of the eight translations from Thomas Corneille, three were done after 1777, two from *Ariane* alone. In 1793 one of these adaptions appeared under the title of *The Rival Sisters*, fathered by Arthur Murphy. This was published in a seven-volume edition of Murphy's works in 1786, but was not played till March 18, 1793. This is the last of the translations produced on the stage, and in this partakes of the nature of the preceding period. It bears the stamp of the eighteenth century in another way; it alters the original to suit English taste. Murphy speaks of this with delicious frankness, in the preface. He begins by saying that Madame de Sévigné, by her account of the reception of the original in Paris and of the great part Mlle. de Champsmeslé played in the success of that flat performance, inspired him to reproduce it in English for Mrs. Siddons's benefit. He continues: "Shall the present writer flatter himself that he has removed the

vices of the first concoction and substituted what is better? He certainly has endeavored to do it. For this Purpose a New Fable was required. The progress of the business required to be conducted in a different manner, with more rapidity and without those languid scenes which weaken the interest. . . . The Author does not scruple to say that he entered into competition with the original, that he has aimed at a better tragedy."

He has "conducted the business with more rapidity" by introducing a new minor character, by adding political complications to the love story, and by many other devices of a confusing nature. In general, however, the conduct of the play is very much the same as in the original, and it has the same ending except that it is very much more long drawn out.

Genest[1] is very severe on this tragedy, calling it "dull and uninteresting," "subject badly chosen," "Shakespeare himself could hardly have written a good tragedy on so fabulous a story." Genest's constitutional dislike to anything resembling French tragedy may account for some of the harshness of this judgment; but

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. VII. pp. 90–91.

Murphy's changes in the story, his mediocre versification and management of the plot, were in reality anything but successful. The tragedy obtained some public favor, however, Mrs. Siddons playing *Ariane* and Kemble *Pirithous*. The very length of Genest's severe notice is a witness to the fact that it did not pass entirely unnoticed.

Whatever the degree of success which Murphy's arrangement of *Ariane* secured, it was enough to induce another author to make a translation of the same tragedy. In 1795, the Rev. Mr. Stratford, Rector of Gallstow, County Westmeath, Ireland, was brought to the attention of the public by the publication of a volume containing an original tragedy, *Lord Russel*, and a translation of *Ariane* under the title of *The Labyrinth*. In all probability neither was ever performed, unless perhaps by friendly amateurs in Ireland. An anecdote told by *The Mirror* about Mr. Stratford, makes it almost certain that they never received any encouragement in England. In 1784 he had written his heavy tragedy *Lord Russel*, which he was sure would make a great success, and gathering together all his literary baggage,

which then consisted of five tragedies and five comedies, he went to London to have his works performed at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Harris was manager, and to him Stratford applied. There were no possibilities in any of the plays, and the manager's trained eye saw that at once; but the reverend gentleman was so persistent, that at last he prevailed on Harris to listen, while he read aloud one of his productions. Harris composed himself, and listened patiently through four acts of a comedy. At this point he inquired gravely, "Don't you think it time to bring in Lord Russel?"

"Lord Russel!" cried the astounded playwright, "Sir, this is a comedy!"

"Ah?" said Harris, "I thought you were reading me the tragedy."

This incident is said to have dampened Mr. Stratford's ardor effectually, and he went back to Ireland, much depressed by the low condition of the English stage.

His works seem to have been printed for the first time after his death, when they appeared for the benefit of his sister, printed by subscription. There were ostensibly two editions made at the same time, one English and one Irish,

but there seems no doubt but that they are the same with a different title-page and list of subscribers.

The play itself is a most commonplace production. Stratford says with a self-satisfied smirk in the preface, "Whilst the translator has endeavored to preserve inviolate the reputation of so eminent a French writer, he has likewise been ambitious to assert the superiority of the British Drama."

The following extract, which on the whole is the best speech in the translation, may bear its own testimony to the capacity of Mr. Stratford to assert this superiority (Act IV. Scene 3):

Ariadne. Before that happens be assured, my Phædra,
The world shall know what Ariadne dares,
Who would be made the scorn of public rumour?
'Tis fit I should disguise my indignation,
Theseus for once shall teach me to dissemble,
I'll make him think I approve his marriage;
The stroke delayed, shall fall with greater ruin.[1]

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[1] It is almost impossible to select the French lines which may have served as model for this outburst, but diligent search throughout the whole of this scene has resulted in the selection of the following detached lines:

Entre les bras d'une autre! Avant ce coup, ma sœur,
J'aime, je suis trahie, on connaîtra mon cœur.

This is not only weak in itself, but is a most mutilated and garbled reproduction of the original, and shows that the clergyman had no idea of faithfulness in his translation and no appreciation of the task he had set himself. The play itself has no significance beyond showing into what hands translations had fallen.

The translator of the play next in chronological order is a very quaint and picturesque figure in English life of that time. The worthy Hannah Brand, schoolmistress and actress, prude and tragedy queen, authoress and reformer of stage morals, gave occupation to many of the anecdote writers of those gossipy days. She kept a school for young ladies in Norwich, but abandoned this for the stage. She acted the leading part in a play of her own composition, but her stiffness and self-conceit, lack of experience and of flexibility, made her failure as an actress only a matter of time. Genest gives some quaint reasons for her lack of success. "Her stage dresses were elegant, but the

> Moins l'amour outragé fait voir d'emportement,
> Plus quand le coup approche, il frappe sûrement.
> C'est par là qu'affectant une douleur aisée
> Je feins de consentir à l'hymen de Thesée.

effect of them was spoiled by her wearing of stays in the old fashion."[1] Her objection to low-cut dresses was unalterable. The *Biographica Dramatica*, however, says that her acting was marked by discrimination; and Wilkinson says that apart from her high-flown melodramatic airs she was a woman of really sound understanding. Genest[2] characterizes her admirably, "a sensible woman with great oddities."

These peculiarities of her person make not only highly entertaining reading, but throw a light on some characteristics of her translation of *Don Sanche*, which she published in a volume called *Brand's Plays and Poems* in 1798.

The play itself she calls *The Conflict, or Love, Honour, and Pride*, a title which strikes at once the note of the whole performance. She makes no words about "heightening the colour," as does Murphy, but evidently she had the same end in view. Her methods differ from his, however, and consist of interpolating English sentimentality whenever it is possible. No more curious contrast could be found than the leading characteristics of the

[1] *Some Account*, Vol. VII. p. 49. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 402.

original and those which Miss Brand saw fit to add. The story which Corneille has to tell, by reason of its Spanish nature, lends itself easily to an exaggerated development of the peculiar qualities of Corneille. Exaltation, the loftiest sense of personal dignity, the most extravagant ideas of the divine right of kings, the most punctilious delicacy in matters of honor — all the traits most characteristic of Corneille and of the whole French seventeenth century — are present. In the interval of a century and three-quarters that had elapsed before Miss Brand arrived on the scene and turned her attention to Corneille, literary and emotional fashions had completely changed. It was no longer the mode to have the emotions under strict control, it was a reproach. Rousseau and Sterne had made yielding to every sensation to be a virtue. Personal dignity and reserve were synonymous with insensibility, and that was a crime.

In addition, the British public has always been one to be deeply moved by banalities about the domestic affections. In the story of *Don Sanche d'Arragon*, which turns largely on the recognition of a long-lost son by a

mother and his noble refusal to disown a lowly but virtuous foster-father, Miss Brand saw great opportunities, and the play as she printed it presents the most curious mixture of the two opposing schools of emotion. Where she actually translates she does it well, in flowing blank verse of considerable spirit and fidelity, and she reproduces in no slight degree the somewhat florid dignity of the original. But where she amplifies and adds speeches and scenes of her own, they are of a weakly emotional character, startling to find in a work supposedly by Corneille. The second scene in her fourth act is of her own invention. It begins with a stage direction as out of character as possible for a queen, for a Spanish queen, and for a Corneille Spanish queen :

(*Queen flies to Carlos with open arms. He retreats!*)

Am I so blessed to have a son like Thee!

The rest of the scene is continued in a most unreservedly emotional style. Later, in Act V. Scene 5, there are to be found examples of her amplification, and also of how closely and well she could at times follow her model :

I am this shepherd's Son. He is no cheat,
No infamous impostor, though mean of blood,
He is not vile or foul. And I renounce
More willingly the names of Count and Marquis
Than a son's sentiments of love and duty.
Naught can efface the sacred character
Of Nature's ties within an honest breast.
I left my parents, I disclaimed my name;
My soul for honour sighed, for glory panted
E'en in that cottage where my fate had cast me.
Your courtly maxims warred against my hopes;
The road of Honour and the course of Glory
Were open but to Lords. I had no means
To rise but to conceal my birth.[1]

On the whole, the translation is a very creditable performance for a person of the literary attainments of Hannah Brand. It was probably never played.

Miss Brand's translation of *Don Sanche*, in spite of its faults, has one distinction — that of being the last attempt made in all seriousness to manufacture a piece of English litera-

[1] *Carlos.* Je suis fils d'un pêcheur, mais non pas d'un infâme;
La bassesse du sang ne va pas jusqu'a l'âme,
Et je renonce aux noms de comte et de marquis
Avec bien plus d'honneur qu'aux sentiments de fils;
Rien n'en peut effacer le sacré caractère.

The lines which follow in the English are original with Miss Brand.

ture out of a translated French tragedy. The next three (the last made) bear distinctly the mark of dilettantism, of being the pastime of idle people.

The first, published in 1800, was written by Lady Sophia Burrel, a very wealthy woman who lived the prosperous life of country aristocracy in England. Her poetic output consists of two octavo volumes of verse, and the freely translated *Maximian* from the tragedy of the same name by T. Corneille. This is scarcely more than an adaptation, with many additions of dances, festivities, spectacles, and the like. It is written in smoothly flowing and absolutely commonplace blank verse. That the author approached her work in no serious mood may be gathered with certainty from the Dedication, where she speaks of having undertaken the translation to amuse herself during a tiresome period of convalescence. The *Monthly Review* (Vol. XXXIII. new series, page 221) gives a moderately lengthy report of this work, induced to this action, apparently, by the social standing of the author. Lady Burrel's elegant trifling receives the usual faint praise accorded to recognized amateurs, but the

Review says that it would take more than the pen of a lady of leisure to make French tragedy acceptable in England at that time.

The last translation of the *Cid* appeared in 1802, written by "A Gentleman formerly a Captain in the Army." This *nom de plume* is as complete a disguise for the author now as then, and no one seems ever to have taken any trouble to pierce it. This translation, like that of Lady Burrel, might well have been undertaken as a pastime of a convalescent. It certainly shows not the slightest trace of any real effort to make a good reproduction of the original. The versification is almost uniformly bad, and at times the diction is absurd.

The following selection is the attempt at translation of Don Rodrigue's soliloquy in the first act :

> When on the point of gaining all I wish
> How dismal 'tis to think of such a talk.
> He who begat me is the injur'd man
> And the offender is Chimena's sire.
> This horrid struggle causes shocking pain,
> It quite deranges all my mental powers ![1]

[1] There are no lines in the original which can be selected as the basis of this effusion. "The Gentleman" apparently

If one take the trouble to compare this with the artfully wrought, melodious, and ardent complaint in the original, it almost passes the bounds of credibility that such stuff could have been put out as an attempt at translation, so late as 1802.

The last translation made (always excepting *Athalie*) has a character curiously appropriate to its position as finale of this movement. Sir Brooke Boothby published in 1803 an English version of *Britannicus*, of which the preface is by far the most interesting part. This consists of twenty-five octavo pages of discussion about the differences between the English and French stage, about the introduction, new at that time, of German plays into England, and about the general state of the English theatre. Sir Brooke does all this in a very interesting and discriminating manner. His judgments as to the then prevalent tendencies of the stage are very shrewd, and have been proved correct by time. His remarks on the use of poetry as a dramatic medium are particularly good, and while they may sound platitudinous now, their real

had no wish to do more than attempt to reproduce the general idea of the celebrated monologue.

discrimination is remarkable when it is remembered that they were written a hundred years ago, while public taste was still strongly under the influence of the eighteenth century.

"Melodious versification is rather an impediment to success. The art of reciting verses which appears formerly to have been felt as one of the chief excellences in acting, is in a great measure lost. Neither the actor nor the audience have any ear for the modulations of verse, and the measure is broken off or preserved just as it happens . . . measured recitations and tragic deportment fell into neglect and even disrepute, and there is scarcely an actor on the stage that can repeat a dozen lines, not only with proper rhythm and cadence but without breaking the measure."

The importance of this change of public feeling with regard to recitation has already been pointed out, but it is interesting to note that at least one contemporary saw the meaning of it as clearly as it now appears to us. The translator speaks later with great disgust of the extravagant adaptations of German *Sturm und Drang* tragedies, which were then very popular. "That so chaste and simple a tragedy as the

Britannicus of Racine should succeed on the English stage is less to be expected than ever ; to succeed at present, a piece must comprise in one incoherent jumble every manner at once, except that which is simple and natural — tragedy, farce, opera, pantomime, without sense, or feeling, or conduct, or interest, resembling a sick man's dreams rather than the representation of any rational action." This complaining paragraph shows no especial penetration on the part of Sir Brooke, as it is safe to say that not a decade in the history of the theatre has passed without the appearance of some such sweeping condemnation of the contemporary state of the stage.

It is evident, moreover, upon an examination of the piece itself, that Sir Brooke, like many other severe critics, could not produce much better things than those he condemned. The translation is smooth and dignified, but without force. He has produced a *Britannicus* better than that of Ozell, for he has the negative quality of avoiding the faults of taste that disfigure the latter's work. But a man who exhibits the cultivation and training shown by Boothby in his preface should have been able to

avoid the frequently obscure lines and the occasional trivialities of diction such as

> Such sentiments, *unless I much mistake,*
> Will never find the way to Junia's heart.[1]

As a rule it is only just to say that there are few positive faults to be found with this production. It is simply the work of a man without a spark of inspiration.

It is interesting on one account: it almost seems that Sir Brooke knew, or felt, that he was the last of his line, and as though he were half consciously giving in a very lucid way the reasons for the abandonment of the movement which has been traced in these pages. It is the swan-song of the translators of Racine and Corneille, and is strictly in keeping with the character of most of its predecessors in that it is the work of an intelligent man but not of a poet.

[1] Je connais mal Junie, ou de tels sentiments
Ne mériteront pas ses applaudissements.

XVIII. SUMMARY

This brief and almost forgotten chapter in dramatic history may be adequately summarized as follows:

A prefatory movement and three important periods may be distinguished. A few scattering translations were the precursors of the first period. This began definitely with the restoration of Charles II. to the throne, and continued throughout his reign. It was a serious, earnest and dignified effort to transplant the masterpieces of French dramatic literature to England, and to make them of native growth.

Then follows an interregnum, from the death of Charles until the accession of Queen Anne. During her reign, and the ten years following her death, numbers of translations appeared. This is the most prolific epoch of the whole movement. Encouraged by the success of Ambrose Philips's *Distrest Mother*, and by the famous discussion over Addison's *Cato*, many of the lesser lights of the literary world, more

especially of the theatrical world, devoted themselves to bringing Racine and Corneille to the English stage.

After this period of activity, interest in these two authors gradually died down; and from 1730 to 1750 there is another blank, when no more new translations are attempted. Again another success (William Whitehead's *Roman Father*) started anew the fashion for translated tragedy, and again this gradually disappeared. This closes the significant part of the whole movement. From the end of the eighteenth century the translations were purely scholarly attempts, and as such have no more real meaning for the dramatic world than have similar efforts of our own day.

The result of this investigation clearly illustrates the futility of attempts to establish, permanently, artificial standards of beauty. Any taste which is not a natural growth from within cannot become truly national. Most sincere effort was put forth during two centuries, by various authors and with various methods, to give to the literary world of one nation the beauties of the literary world of the other. This effort practically failed in spite of the

many advantages which it possessed over other similar movements. It is a striking exemplification of the truth that national taste is a natural organic growth and that no efforts, however competent and strenuous, can radically change its inherent nature.

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PIERRE CORNEILLE

The Cid. A Tragicomedy out of French made English, and acted before their Majesties at Court and on the Cockpit Stage in Drury Lane. London. 1637.

Polyeuctes, or The Martyr. A Tragedy, by Sir William Lower. London. 1655.

Horatius. A Roman Tragedy, by Sir William Lower, Knight. London. 1656.

Pompey. A Tragedy (Translated from the French of Pierre Corneille with the Additions of Songs) by Katharine Philips. London. 1663.

Pompeius, Called the Great. Translated out of French by Certain Persons of Honour. London. 1664.

Heraclius, Emperour of the East. Englished by L. Carlell. London. 1664.

Poems. By the most deservedly Admired Mrs. K. Philips, The Matchless Orinda. To which is added Monsieur Corneille's Pompey and Horace. Tragedies. London. 1667.

The same with John Denham's completion of the translation of the Horace. London. 1669. Another edition of same in 1678.

The same but with Cotton's fifth act of the Horace substituted for Denham's. London. 1710.

Horace. A French Tragedy. Englished by Charles Cotton. London. 1671.

Nicomede. A Tragicomedy. Translated out of French by J. Dancer. London. 1671. This is published by Francis Kirkman who printed with it "an exact catalogue of all English Stage plays presented till this present year, 1671."

The Mistaken Beauty, or The Lyar. A Comedy. Acted . . . at the Royal Theatre. London. 1685.

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Cinna's Conspiracy. A Tragedy. London. 1713.

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The Heroick Daughter, or Ximena, by Colley Cibber. London. 1718.

Cæsar in Ægypt. A Tragedy as it is acted at the Theatre Royal. . . . Written by Mr. Cibber. London. 1725.

The Roman Father. A Tragedy by William Whitehead. London. 1750.

The Lyar. A Comedy by Samuel Foote. London. 1764.

Rodogune. A Tragedy. Translated from the French by Stanhope Aspinwall. London. 1765.

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THOMAS CORNEILLE

The Extravagant Sheepherd. A Pastorall Comedie. Written in French by T. Corneille. Englished by T. R. London. 1654.

The Amorous Orontus, or The Love in Fashion. A Comedy. London. 1665.

The Astrologer. London. 1668. (Title-page missing.)

An Evening's Love, or The Mock Astrologer. London. 1671. (By John Dryden.)

The Rival Father, or The Death of Achilles. A Tragedy as it is acted. . . . London. 1730.

Constantine. A tragedy by Dr. Philip Francis. London. 1754.

The Brothers. A Tragedy. Written by Dr. Edward Young, as performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. London. 1776.

The Rival Sisters. A Tragedy by A. Murphy Esq. adapted for theatrical representation, as performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. London. 1793.

The Labyrinth, or Fatal Embarrassment. A Tragedy . . . for the benefit of Agnes Stratford, sister of the late Rev. Thomas Stratford. London. 1795.

Maximian. A Tragedy taken from Corneille . . . by Lady Sophia Burrel. London. 1800.

RACINE

Andromache. A Tragedy as it is acted at the Duke's Theatre. London. 1675.

Titus and Berenice. A Tragedy as it is acted. . . . By Thomas Otway. London. 1677.

Achilles or Iphigenia in Aulis. A Tragedy as it is acted. . . . Written by Mr. Boyer. London. 1700.

Phædra and Hippolitus. A Tragedy as it is acted. . . . By Mr. Edmund Smith. London. 1706.

The Distrest Mother. A Tragedy by Ambrose Philips. London. 1712. (Very many later editions.)

The Victim, or Achilles and Iphigenia in Aulis. A Tragedy. Written by Mr. Boyer. London. 1714.

The Victim. A Tragedy. Written by Charles Johnson. London. 1714.

Two Tragedies, viz., Britannicus and Alexander, now first translated from the French of M. Racine by Mr. Ozell. London. 1714.

Esther, or Faith Triumphant. A Sacred Tragedy by Mr. Brereton. London. 1715.

The Litigants. A Comedy translated from the French of M. Racine by Mr. Ozell. London. 1715.

The Sultaness. A Tragedy. Written by Charles Johnson. London. 1717. (There were two editions issued in the same year, 1717.)

The Fatal Legacy. A Tragedy as it is acted. . . . London. 1723.

Athaliah. A Tragedy. Translated from the French of Monsieur Racine by Mr. William Duncombe. London. 1722.

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Britannicus. A Tragedy. Translated from the French of Racine by Sir Brooke Boothby Bart. London. 1803.

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Athaliah. A Tragedy. Translated from the French by J. C. Knight. London. 1822.

Athaliah. A Sacred Drama. Translated from the Athalie of Racine by Charles Randolph. London. 1829.

Athaliah. A Sacred Drama. Translated from Racine and Original Poems by the late Thomas Fry of Tunbridge Wells. London. 1841.

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